

# Young Klondike

## STORIES OF A GOLD SEEKER.

*Issued Semi-Monthly—By Subscription \$1.25 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.*

No. 19.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 23, 1898.

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### YOUNG KLONDIKE'S DEEP SEA DIGGINGS; —OR—

### WORKING AT THE MOUTH OF THE YUKON.

BY AUTHOR OF "YOUNG KLONDIKE."



"Have you struck it?" cried Dick, leaning over to have a look. "Eureka!" cried Young Klondike, holding up a nugget as big as a cocoanut. "Struck it, yes! I've located the deep sea diggings; there's barrels of nuggets where I found this."



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## YOUNG KLONDIKE'S DEEP SEA DIGGINGS;

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### CHAPTER I.

#### HUGO, THE DIVER.

THE little town of St. Michaels, Alaska, situated near the mouth of the Yukon river, is a place which previous to the great gold discoveries in the Klondike country was known only to a few whalers and fur traders.

It is a small collection of houses located on an island of the same name some few miles east of the mouth of the river.

At the present time it has become a place of much activity, as all steamers bound to and from Dawson City, make it a calling point, although it lies considerably out of their course.

In the early fall business took the now famous Young Klondike to St. Michaels.

With him was Dick Luckey his partner, and Miss Edith Welton, the young lady whose life he had saved from a wrecked steamer on his first voyage out to the gold diggings.

That mysterious individual who always accompanied Golden and Luckey in all their travels was there, too, and in making this allusion it will be of course understood that we refer to the little detective who passed under the name of the Unknown, for the want of a better; for, strange as it may seem, although Young Klondike had been associated with this man now for a long time he did not know his name, the same being a secret which no amount of coaxing was sufficient to prevail upon the Unknown to reveal.

The arrival of the famous firm of Golden & Luckey at St. Michaels created quite a furor, and all the big guns of the town promptly waited upon the travelers at the long log house, which in St. Michaels is called the hotel.

Young Klondike received all with his customary

courtesy, but not having come to St. Michaels to do the social act, took means to cut the visits short.

Bright and early next morning—and that was somewhat before daylight, for at this season the sun is a late riser at St. Michaels, Young Klondike and his partner left the hotel and went down to the water-side.

They carried a lantern to light their way along the muddy street—there had been a heavy rainfall the day previous—and as they walked among the rude log huts which lie along the water front, they flashed its light up upon the signs.

"It ought to be here somewhere, Dick," remarked Ned, "but I'll be hanged if I can see it."

"Same with me," replied Dick, "and yet this is the direction we had."

"Shall we go in somewhere and inquire?"

"I wouldn't, if I was you. The less attention we attract the better."

"I suppose that's so. Everybody is watching us, of course, and I don't care to have anyone get on to my business, if I can help it."

It looked by this very much as though Young Klondike was bound on some secret mission that morning.

In a certain sense this was the case.

Not that this very successful young man was of the secretive sort, for he was nothing of the kind, but simply that he did not want all the world to know what he was doing, and the attention of the entire mining world in Alaska was attracted to him just then.

The boys walked on a little further, and taking a turn came to a log house built close down to the water's edge with a wharf running out beyond.

Over the door was the sign "Hugo Sargentisch."

There was no explanation of Mr. Sargentisch's business. The name indicated that he was a Russian, but then one cannot tell in Alaska, where there are often bright young Americans bearing Russian names,



the descendants of the old Russian families in Sitka and other coast towns.

"This is the place!" exclaimed Dick.

"You're right," said Ned. "There's no one around watching us either. Shall we go in?"

"By all means. That's what we have come for."

Ned knocked on the door, which was soon opened by a stalwart young fellow in his shirt sleeves, wearing a sealskin vest and smoking a clay pipe.

There was something so bright and energetic in his whole appearance, that Young Klondike and his partner were attracted to him at once.

"Are you Mr. Sargentisch?" asked the former.

"That's my name, sir. I think I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Ned Golden. I saw you last night at the hotel."

"Probably you did. I was there. Mr. Sargentisch, this is Dick Luckey, my partner."

Partner Dick and Mr. Sargentisch shake hands; then they walk into as singular a looking room as Ned had ever seen.

It was a regular divers' den, so to speak.

There were divers' helmets on shelves, and divers' suits of all kinds hanging from wooden pegs.

Against the wall was a cabinet of curiosities. There were whales' teeth beautifully carved by the Haida and Tshim-Sohian Indians, with painted masks and great wooden idols of hideous appearance, the work of the same strange people. Altogether the room looked like a museum, and Young Klondike could not help so remarking as they went in.

Mr. Sargentisch smiled.

"Well, yes; I have done something in the collecting line," he said. "I've been gathering these things for many years."

He then motioned his visitors to be seated, and added:

"Now, then, what can I do for you, gentlemen? I'm at your service. I see you have come on business and not merely to make a call."

"Well, that's right," replied Ned. "We are here for business. You do deep sea diving, I am told?"

"That's in my line."

"We want to employ a diver. I have been recommended to you."

"I think I can safely say that I'm the best diver in St. Michaels, without blowing my own horn," said Mr. Sargentisch, "for the very excellent reason that I'm the only one."

"Is that a fact?"

"It is; if you want work done under the sea, it's Hobson's choice. You'll have to take Hugo, the diver, or let the job alone."

"Is that what they call you?"

"Yes; everybody knows Hugo, the diver."

"I shouldn't think the business would pay here?"

"Well, it wouldn't, right here in St. Michaels. Where I make my money is further north."

"I don't think I understand."

"That's because you are not acquainted with our St. Michaels business. You see this is the station

for the great Arctic Whaling Fleet. Every year some of the whalers are pretty sure to get nipped in the ice in the fall, and very often the ships are sunk up in the Kotzebue Sound, or wherever they may happen to be, their sides being stove in by the ice."

"Then you come in."

"Then I come in, as you say. I go up there, and raise the oil, and recover whatever may be of value on board."

"Is there business enough of this sort of thing to keep you going?"

"In the spring I always have plenty to do. The rest of the year I am in other lines; fitting up whale-ships with whatever they may need, cooperating up their casks, and doing a general business. In fact, you may safely call me a Jack-of-all-trades, for that's what I am."

"Then I take it you are not busy now?"

"Not at all. It ain't time for the whalers to come down—won't be these three weeks."

"Could I engage your services as a diver?"

"Certainly."

"And the pay?"

Hugo named a remarkable price.

"I'll double that on one condition," said Ned, promptly.

"Which is what?"

"That you keep the whole affair a profound secret."

"I do that with all my engagements. I don't want to rob you, Mr. Golden. I am satisfied to receive what I asked."

"And I am satisfied to give the higher price, and propose to do it," said Ned. "The undertaking is a dangerous one; moreover, I shall want to go down myself, and that will involve you in extra trouble and risk."

"The risk will be yours. Remember, the temperature of this water runs very low."

"Do you think you will be able to stand it?"

"I'm going to try."

"That suits me."

"Then I will not refuse your liberal offer. I will do my best. I suppose you will not object to explaining the nature of the work?"

"Not by any means. I presume you are aware that I am in the mining business up in the Klondike country?"

"Everybody knows Young Klondike," replied Hugo, with a smile.

"We have been fairly successful, and I have made a study of placer mines and the conditions under which they occur. I have figured it out that——"

Slam! Bang!

All at once there was a frightful clatter at the door, which flew open, admitting a man who was too drunk to stand, apparently.

He gave a whoop and went sprawling on the floor.

Hugo, the diver, sprang up in a rage.

"What do you mean by this, Judd?" he exclaimed.

"Get up out of that, you drunken brute! Don't you



know better than to come tumbling in on me like this when I am talking to these gentlemen?"

He seized the fellow by the collar and jerked him to his feet.

"One of my men," he explained. "A good enough fellow when he's sober and a splendid diver, but unfortunately given to going on drunks."

"He seems to be on a pretty big one now," remarked Dick.

"He certainly does. Shall I fire him out, or would you mind if I tumbled him into the bunk and let him go to sleep?"

"Why, put him in the bunk by all means," said Ned. "He's too far gone to be any hindrance to us. Inside of two minutes he'll be off asleep."

So Hugo, the diver, picked up the drunkard, and threw him into one of the bunks built up against the wall of the hut.

The man, with a sleepy grunt, lay motionless.

Apparently he was off asleep already.

"Now, then," said Ned, "sit down here and I'll explain what this business is."

They seated themselves at the table, and Young Klondike drew from his pocket a small paper parcel.

This he opened and spread upon the table three golden nuggets as big as potatoes.

"Thunder! What nuggets! Where did you get them?" cried Hugo, the diver.

"They came from the mouth of the Yukon," replied Young Klondike, "and what I want of you is to help us get more of the same sort."

"If they are there I can do it—make no mistake."

"Then you're the man for my money," cried Young Klondike, "and don't you make the mistake of thinking we won't be liberal with you in case we succeed."

It would be impossible to make any mistake on that score, for Young Klondike's reputation for liberality was too widely known.

But Hugo, the diver, had made a big mistake in another matter.

Instead of being asleep in the bunk, the man Judd was wide awake and even then was peering over the edge of the bunk, looking with greedy eyes at the gold.

"So that's what he's up to," he said to himself.

"That's all right. I think I can earn my hundred dollars without much trouble. All I've got to do is to be drunk again and take all this in."

He dropped back in the bunk and lay motionless as Young Klondike began to talk.

mouth of the Yukon, what do you mean? How did you get them? What's their history? Naturally I'm curious to know."

"Easily explained," replied Ned. "They were given me by a man who used to work for you?"

"For me? What was his name?"

"Jack Ricketts."

"I remember him well. He was a diver from San Francisco; a worthless fellow. We couldn't get along at all."

"I should think it very likely. He is dead."

"So?"

"Yes."

"What happened him?"

"He was killed in a drunken row."

"I always said it would be his end."

"I was able to do him a favor once, and after he was shot I took him into my house at El Dorado creek and took care of him until he died."

"And out of gratitude he gave you those nuggets, and told you he got them at the mouth of the Yukon?"

"Yes—claimed to have taken them out of the sand in a hundred feet of water when he went down to help you bring up the strong box out of the cabin of the J. J. Dunlap two years ago."

"He was the biggest liar on the face of the earth, that's what Jack Ricketts was!" said Hugo, bringing down his fist upon the table with great emphasis.

"Then there is no truth in the story?"

"I know nothing about that. I only tell you what the man's character was."

"Was there such a ship as the Dunlap?"

"Oh, yes! She was wrecked at the mouth of the Yukon, near Duck Island. I had the contract to bring up the valuables."

"And this Jack Ricketts did go down for you?"

"Yes, he did; he never said anything to me about nuggets, though."

"Perhaps you were not on good terms with him?"

"I wasn't at all. He was no good. You are sure he is dead?"

"Oh, yes. I saw him die and buried him."

"That ought to settle it. What I was going to say, was that unless you were really sure of it you might expect to see him turn up again. He could lie as fast as a horse can trot. I'll tell you frankly, Mr. Golden, I don't believe he ever got those nuggets out of the deep sea, but if he did, why then he has told a hundred others besides yourself."

"That's very likely, but it don't make the story any the less true."

"Certainly not. If it's true, it's true; if it's false, it's false."

"I'm am prepared to test its truth."

"What's your theory?"

"Just this; the Yukon river runs through the greatest gold producing country in the world, don't it?"

"It undoubtedly does."

"There can be no doubt that if in the beds of all

## CHAPTER II.

### BETRAYED TO THE ENEMY.

"You see, Hugo, there's no nonsense about those nuggets," said Ned. "They are pure gold."

"Anyone can see that with half an eye," replied the diver; "but when you say they came from the



the small creeks and rivers gold is invariably found up in the Klondike, a correspondingly greater deposit lies in the bed of the Yukon and is constantly being swept out to sea."

"That sounds to be a very reasonable theory."

"It is a reasonable theory; and in my judgment it is a correct one."

"And you think then that the place to expect the greatest deposit is at the mouth of the Yukon?"

"Yes."

"But the Yukon has many mouths; there are dozens of islands there."

"I know that, and the water surges around these islands, shaking up everything it carries with it; therefore just beyond the islands is the place to look for gold, for there the tendency must be to settle again, and any nuggets will be pretty sure to get down to the bottom as quick as they can, owing to their weight."

"It certainly sounds reasonable, but then I'm no miner—only a diver."

"One don't have to be a miner in order to understand it; you can see yourself it must be true."

"I suppose it is, but wouldn't the undertow carry the gold on?"

"Very likely, but some would be pretty sure to find its level, especially if there should happen to be a depression in the bottom, and that's what Ricketts declared is the condition of things where the Dunlap went down."

"Very likely he's right about the gold; I know he is about the ship."

"Oh, there is such a depression then?"

"There certainly is."

"Then that stamps his story as true. I want to prove it, and am willing to pay all the bills."

Hugo looked at Young Klondike admiringly.

"Well, you're the kind of fellow I like to see," he exclaimed. "There ain't one man in ten thousand who would have the courage to go down at the mouth of the Yukon this time of year."

"Or any other time, I reckon," laughed Dick. "I doubt if there is one man in ten thousand who would be willing to go down in a diver's suit at all."

"You're right there," said Hugo, "but of course my remark referred to those who would be willing to go down under suitable conditions. You are determined to do it, boss?"

"I certainly am if I can get your help," replied Ned.

"You can count that as settled."

"Very good. Now about the apparatus; can you furnish it?"

"I can furnish everything."

"In the way of diving-suits, air pump and all that sort of thing?"

"Yes."

"How about a boat?"

"I've got as pretty a little schooner yacht of my own as ever you laid your eyes on. We can take the

Minnie and run down to Duck Island any time you say."

"Well, I say as soon as possible. How long will it take us to reach Duck Island?"

"If we start this afternoon at sundown, we ought to be there by sunrise to-morrow."

"That's the talk. It will be better than putting in the night on the island. Consider it settled. If any money is needed, you can draw on me for whatever you want."

The bargain being now concluded, the conversation drifted into diving talk generally.

Hugo explained what would have to be done and how to do it.

Perhaps half an hour was occupied in this.

So interested were Young Klondike and Dick, and, indeed, Hugo himself, that none of them ever looked toward the bunk or gave the drunken man a thought, until all at once Hugo sprang up, exclaiming:

"Where's Judd?"

Where, sure enough!

The bunk was empty!

Watching his opportunity, the man had slipped out and managed to leave the house unobserved.

If he had been caught at it, Judd would have been drunker than ever, but inasmuch as he was not caught, he turned up perfectly sober outside.

As soon as he was safely out of the hut, he made his way to one of the lowest saloons in St. Michaels, which happened to be right around the corner. As he turned the corner he ran into a little man, wearing a plug hat and big military boots; they came together with such force that the little man nearly went down.

"Gee whiz! Young Klondike's friend!" gasped Judd, beneath his breath.

If the little man heard him say this he did not show it; he seemed tremendously angry.

"Who in thunder are you trying to run down?" he sputtered. "Can't you look where you are going, you clumsy fool?"

"I couldn't that time—no!" growled Judd.

"Well, you'd better next time, or I'll let you in for something you won't like?"

"Such as what!" snarled Judd, stopping and sidling up to the little man in a ruffianly way.

"Such as this!" cried the little man, suddenly twisting his leg between Judd's two legs, and tripping him up.

"There you are! Learn to be civil, or by the Jumping Jeremiah, I'll give you another lesson," said the little man, and he turned the corner and hurried away.

Judd swore terribly and then entered the saloon.

He recognized the little man as the Unknown, the detective who always went about with Young Klondike.

A man less shrewd than the Unknown might not have heard his muttered remark, or hearing it might not have thought it worth his while to pay any attention to it.



But the Unknown was as sharp as they make 'em. He both heard and heeded, and said to himself as he turned the corner:

"If he is so blame sure of my being Young Klondike's friend and so surprised to meet me, why, then, he must be Young Klondike's enemy—that's plain."

The idea seized him the instant he heard the remark.

His dodging around the corner was only a ruse.

Giving the man Judd just time enough to move on, the Unknown had his eye around the corner of the log house.

He saw Judd go into the saloon, and immediately determined to follow him.

This was easier said than done, for the Unknown was a person of striking appearance.

But he was also a man equal to any emergency.

Nearby, on the same street, was a Jew clothing store, quite a shop in its way.

The Unknown was inside in a twinkling.

"I want so and so, and so and so," he said, "and I want to leave my hat and boots here till I call for them. Can I do that?"

"Certainly you can," replied the Jew, and he produced the articles in question.

The Unknown had completely changed his appearance in a few moments, and he finished the transformation by putting on a false beard of his own.

"Think anyone would recognize me as the same man now?" he asked of the Jew.

"Never," was the reply. "You are a detective, perhaps?"

"Perhaps."

"I saw you talking with a man on the corner just now."

"Yes. Tell me who he is and what you know about him, and there'll be five dollars storage on the things I'm going to leave."

When the Unknown went out of the clothing store, he knew all about Judd.

He had the man down as an expert diver, but also as a drunken loafer who could not keep straight so long as he had a cent in his pocket.

"That fellow means no good," thought the Unknown, as he entered the saloon.

He remained inside a long time—long enough for Ned and Dick to entirely complete their business and return to the hotel.

When he came out at last, Judd was a few moments ahead of him, and now actually drunk.

With him were two hard looking characters.

"That's all right," Judd said at parting with them. "I'll lay down to the island and watch my chance. If we can capture the girl and run her into hiding somewhere, we can easy make Young Klondike pay a hundred thousand dollars to get her free."

Had Young Klondike's plans been betrayed to an enemy?

It certainly looked very much that way.

### CHAPTER III.

#### OFF ON THE MINNIE.

"SHE looks to be a good boat," said Edith. "I don't know really that I ever saw a prettier yacht."

"She's a daisy," replied Ned, who with Edith and Dick had come down to Hugo's wharf to look at the Minnie. "See what a complete little cabin she has, everything neat and trim, and every chance for a good night's sleep, and to cook a decent meal. I say there's no doubt that we can be almost as comfortable on board the Minnie as in our own house at Young Klondike."

Now this was saying a good deal, for the house at "Young Klondike," as Ned's camp on El Dorado creek was called, was quite a model in its way.

"When do we start?" asked Edith.

"About four o'clock."

"But it will be getting dark then."

"Of course. Hugo is perfectly familiar with the way. He says he is just as able to navigate the Minnie to Duck Island in the dark, as in broad daylight."

"Do you suppose he is?"

"Personally I haven't a doubt of it."

"Then by all means let's go. I'm thoroughly tired of that horrid hotel, and shall be only too glad to get into the cabin of this neat little yacht."

"If our expedition proves a success, Miss Welton, the name of my yacht is to be changed," said Hugo, coming up behind them at this instant.

"And what shall you call it?" asked Edith, blushing.

"The Edith."

"The Minnie sounds better."

"I don't think so. The name wasn't of my choosing; it belonged to the yacht when I bought her in Junean last year, and I should prefer to have the name changed as a remembrance of an expedition which I feel sure is going to prove a most agreeable one if not the huge success that our friend Young Klondike hopes."

"It will be a success, and I'm sure of it," said Ned. "I'm going to run the provisions right down now, Hugo. We shall be on board by half-past three and we can start promptly at four, providing my friend shows up."

The allusion was to the Unknown, of course.

He had been missing all the afternoon.

Shortly before four, however, he put in an appearance.

He came sauntering down on the wharf just as though he had known all about the sailing of the Minnie, when as a matter of fact he knew nothing of the arrangements Ned had made.

"Hello! Where in thunder have you been all this time?" exclaimed Young Klondike.

"Oh, just knocking about town," replied the detective, coolly. "What about this boat? Are we to go off on a cruise?"



"That's what, but you haven't been knocking about town for a cent?"

"Who says I haven't?"

"I say so. Dick and I have looked for you everywhere. St. Michaels ain't so large a place that we could miss you very well."

The detective gave one of his chuckling laughs.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, you may find out sooner or later that I've been attending to your business as well as mine, dear boy," he said.

"Anything up?"

"We'll see."

"Better explain. I see you've got something on your mind."

But the detective was not in an explaining mood.

Ned and Dick saw this at a glance, for they knew his peculiarities well, so they did not press him for further information then.

Shortly after a large quantity of provisions were brought down to the Minnie, and Young Klondike and his party busied themselves stowing them away on board.

Meanwhile, Hugo had loaded on the diving-suits, air-pumps, grappling irons and everything which seemed likely to be needed for the expedition.

It was half-past four when the sail was run up, and the Minnie catching a favorable breeze glided off into the North Sound.

The Unknown sat in the stern looking shoreward as they moved away, and remained in the same position for fully fifteen minutes.

"What are you looking for?" demanded Ned at last. "One would think you were leaving your best girl behind you, old man?"

"I'm watching for the other boat," replied the detective, quietly, "that's what I'm about, dear boy."

"The other boat—what other boat?"

"Come closer, boys; I've got a story to tell, and I don't want Edith to hear."

The Unknown, in a low voice, then related what had occurred.

Ned was greatly disturbed.

"Why, it must be that scoundrel who played drunk in Hugo's house," he said.

"That's who it was, undoubtedly," said the detective, after Ned related the incident. "Don't mention this to Hugo."

"And why? I can trust him fully."

"Perhaps."

"I'm sure of it."

"And I'm sure of nothing but death and taxes. I say don't mention it to Hugo. We'll keep our eyes open and paddle our own canoe."

"Very well; I don't insist. Who are these men, though?"

"The man who hired Judd is the notorious Martin Toner, of Dawson City, Young Klondike. I don't think I need go any further than that."

Ned gave a prolonged whistle.

The detective had named a man who was his bitter enemy.

Not that he had any special reason to be, yet so it was.

Martin Toner had been a claim broker in Dawson City, and a more worthless swindler never disgraced the metropolis of the Klondike.

Through Young Klondike's exertions he had been run out of town, and warned never to return.

This was a year before the opening of our story.

When Toner left Dawson he swore vengeance on Young Klondike, and it began to look now very much as though he intended to keep his oath.

"We'll keep a sharp eye out for him," said Ned, after a few moments' thought. "Let him get the best of us if he can. How do you know they mean to follow us in another boat?"

"Because I heard them say so when I was shadowing them in the saloon."

"That's good evidence. You don't see anything of them, though?"

"Not a thing. I've been watching sharp, too."

"There's a sail now!" cried Dick.

From behind one of the many islands among which they were passing, a sail had suddenly come in sight.

Looking back, our friends saw a small but substantial yacht standing toward them.

"There's no doubt that it's Judd," said the detective. "We must see what Hugo will say to this."

Hugo called their attention to the yacht at the same instant.

"I see it," replied Ned. "What do you make of it?"

"It's the Twilight."

"And what's the Twilight?"

"The only other yacht in St. Michaels besides mine that amounts to anything. I can't imagine who has her out."

"Ever use her yourself?" asked the Unknown.

"Lots of times before I bought the Minnie. It bothers me to think who can be on board."

They watched the yacht for a short time longer, and then it grew so thick that she was lost in the mists.

"It's going to be a nasty night," said Hugo. "You'd better get down into the cabin, boss. I'll keep a lookout for the Twilight. I don't like the idea of her being at our heels for a cent."

Ned said no more then, and they all went into the cabin.

He felt inclined to leave the whole matter in the hands of the Unknown, who had begun it, and seemed to be the proper person to carry it through to the end.

Not a word was said to Edith, for they did not want to worry her unnecessarily.

Never guessing of the plot against her, Edith was busy preparing supper, which was soon ready, and they all sat down to eat.

Half an hour later Hugo was called down for his supper, and Ned took his turn at the wheel.

"Seen anything more of the Twilight?" he asked,



as the master of the Minnie was about to leave his post.

"Caught a glimpse of her once. She's keeping to the westward of the islands, it would seem."

"What does that mean?"

"That whoever is running her don't want us to see him."

"Oh, that's it, is it. Then we are being followed?"

Hugo rubbed his chin and looked puzzled.

"It certainly looks so, but I can't imagine who would do it," he replied.

"How about that fellow, Judd? Might he not have been playing 'possum, and overheard our plans?"

"There's certainly that chance."

"Is he up to it? Could he have any idea of making us trouble?"

Ned watched Hugo's face attentively as he answered.

"He ain't smart enough to do it himself; but he's mean enough to sell out the information to others, if there's anyone to buy."

Certainly the diver spoke with every appearance of honesty. Disregarding the Unknown's caution Ned went a step further.

"Do you know Martin Toner?" he asked.

No; Hugo did not know Martin Toner. He had never heard of any such person.

So the conversation dropped, and Hugo went below.

During the time he held the wheel Ned saw nothing of the Twilight.

It grew darker and darker. There was every appearance of a storm.

Yet there was no great wind. What there was blew from the northeast, and was carrying them toward their destination.

When Ned turned in Hugo prophesied a quiet night. He thought a storm might be at hand, but he was sure that it couldn't come before morning.

"By that time we ought to be safe at Duck Island," he declared, and he added that in his judgment there was no cause for alarm.

All hands turned in at the same time that night, for Hugo declared that he needed no one to help him on the watch.

Along toward morning Ned was rudely awakened by having his head banged against the partition. The Minnie was laboring in a heavy sea.

He sprang up and looked over at the sofa where Dick had lain down and saw that it was vacant.

The little state-room door, behind which Edith was sleeping, remained closed, and the Unknown was snoring in his bunk.

Hurrying on his thick overcoat and a hat, Ned went on deck.

Hugo was at the wheel and Dick was on the watch forward.

The weather had changed completely, and the Minnie was running through a violent snow squall under close reef.

"What's all this, Hugo?" shouted Ned, barely

able to make himself heard. "Why didn't you call me?"

"One is enough," replied Hugo. "I did call, and Mr. Luckey responded. He's doing the lookout act all right."

Ned made his way to the bows and took his station beside Dick, who exclaimed:

"Hello, Ned! I thought you were sound asleep."

"So I was a minute ago, but I am wide enough awake now. By Jove, this is a highly interesting state of affairs!"

"It's tough, but Hugo says it won't last long."

"It's to be hoped it won't; what time is it?"

"Near five o'clock."

"Thunder! Then I must have slept all night. Didn't think I'd been in bed an hour."

"That's what's the matter. We ought to be at Duck Island inside of an hour, Hugo says."

"Hope he knows his way through all this whirl. I'll be blest if I see how he can tell where he's going."

"He says he can. He seems to be as cool as a cucumber. I've been expecting we'd run into some island every minute, though!"

"Are we right among the islands?"

"Yes. We're at the mouth of the Yukon now. You know what a mass of islands it is?"

"Certainly I do. I don't see how he ever expected to avoid being run ashore—by thunder, there's one now! We're running right into it!"

"Land on the weather bow!" roared Dick, as a dark mass of rocks suddenly made itself visible through the blackness ahead.

Hugo worked his wheel and the Minnie went skimming along close to the ledge, against which the sea was breaking with thunderous noise.

"Light ahead!" cried Young Klondike, all in the same instant.

It was most startling.

In a moment a bright light shot across their path and they beheld a yacht charging head on for another ledge of rocks, which until now, had not been seen.

"Great Heavens! It's the Twilight, and she's a goner!" shouted Hugo, springing up in great excitement.

At the same instant the yacht struck the ledge and keeled over.

There were three men visible on the deck at the time, and one, losing his balance, went over the side as the Twilight ground against the rocks, righted, and then glided off into the darkness, and was lost from view.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DIVING FOR NUGGETS.

"HELP, help! Save me!"

It was a dismal cry which made itself heard through the storm.



Ned could see the poor wretch struggling in the water distinctly enough, for Dick seized the bow lantern and threw its light down upon the water.

"Look out for me, Hugo! I'm going to save that man!" shouted Young Klondike, and waiting only to throw aside his coat and hat, Ned plunged into the water, calling to Dick to keep the light upon him as he went.

It was as brave as it was foolhardy—just that, and nothing more.

Not one man in a thousand would have done it to save the life of his best friend, and here was Young Klondike doing it to save one whom he had every reason to believe was his enemy.

But this was just the sort of fellow Young Klondike was.

That dive into the icy water sent a chill through him which would have brought death to many a stronger man.

But Ned could swim like a duck, and was perfectly at home in the water.

When he came to the surface he saw the man close to him.

He was swimming feebly and still calling for help, but the yacht from which he had fallen was nowhere to be seen.

Not so the Minnie, however.

Hugo and Dick had no idea of letting Young Klondike drown.

Hugo handled the yacht with great skill, and brought her around so that she was but a few feet away from Ned when he seized the drowning man by the coat collar, and with his powerful grip, forced him away.

"Keep off! Keep off! Don't grab me, or I'll let you go!" he shouted, and then, in the same breath, he called to Dick to throw him a rope, which was done.

The man seemed to be half stupefied. He did just as Ned ordered him to do. The rope was passed under his arms, and Dick and Hugo had little difficulty in pulling him aboard, where he fell down on the deck, puffing like a grampus, while Ned, without any other help than his own hands, came climbing over the side.

"By thunder, you're a brick, Young Klondike!" cried Hugo. "There ain't another man in St. Michaels who could have done what you did. Don't believe I could have done it myself, and all for the sake of this drunken scoundrel, too."

"Who is he?" asked Ned, shaking himself. "Judd?"

"That's who he is."

"I thought so, as near as I could make out down there. Better get his clothes off or he'll peg out. He seems pretty well used up as it is."

"And how about you?" cried Dick. "We don't want to see you pegging out. Hustle your clothes off just as quick as you can."

But Ned only laughed at this caution.

He refused to make a move for himself until Judd's case was attended to.

Between them he and Dick carried the now unconscious man down into the cabin.

They stripped off his clothes, rubbed him down with whisky and put him in Ned's own bunk, and it was all done so quietly that neither Edith nor the Unknown were aroused.

Judd seemed very grateful. He recovered consciousness almost at the start, and thanked Young Klondike again and again for what he had done.

"I shall never forget it—never!" he said. "You won't be sorry for this, boss—no, you won't—that's me."

"Go to sleep. I'll talk to you later on," was Ned's reply, and he proceeded to attend to his own wants, which were becoming pressing, for by this time he was chilled to the bone.

A good rub down with a coarse towel and dry clothes soon put him all right again.

Hugo wanted him to take a drink of whisky, and sent down his own flask by Dick, but Ned only laughed at the idea.

"No healthy man needs whisky," he said, "and I thank God I've got my health. I shall be all right just as soon as I get into dry clothes."

By the time the Unknown woke up Judd was soon asleep and snoring. It was now half-past six. The storm had cleared away, proving to be only a squall, as Hugo had said.

Ned and Dick were on deck, watching the ever changing scene with intense interest.

The Minnie was still running between the islands at the mouth of the Yukon, where no one but an expert pilot could have guided her, but Hugo was all of that.

"We shall be at Duck Island inside of twenty minutes," he was just saying, when suddenly there came a shout from the cabin below.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, who's this?" called the Unknown, tumbling up on deck.

"Rattle him a bit, Ned," whispered Dick.

"Who's who?" he asked aloud.

"That fellow in Ned's bunk! Where the mischief did he come from?"

"You must be off," laughed Ned. "Who should be in my bunk but myself, and you see I ain't there."

"Come now, come now! You ain't there, but that fellow Judd is."

"Have you got 'em again, Zed?" chuckled Dick. "How in thunder could Judd get into Ned's bunk?"

The Unknown pulled off his plug hat and struck it against the rail of the yacht.

"If Judd ain't sound asleep in Ned's bunk then I'll eat my head!" he exclaimed. "No use talking to me or trying to fool with me. Something has happened, and I've slept through it all."

"You are right," said Dick; "something has happened, and he went on to tell of the strange occurrences of the night.

"It's just like Young Klondike," declared the Un-



known; "but you'll find it's a case of snake warming. What does Hugo say?"

"Nothing about the plot, for he don't know."

"Don't tell him. It will do no good. We'll keep our own counsel. What does Judd say himself?"

"Haven't asked him. He was in no shape to talk last night."

"Leave it to me, then. I'll attend to that part of the business. We are going to see more of the Twilight, boys, and don't you forget it. I must keep a sharp lookout. Trust me."

Half an hour after that Edith came on deck, and the story had to be gone over with again.

While they were still telling it, Hugo ran the Minnie into a little bay and dropped anchor.

"Duck Island," he cried. "Here we are at last!"

They could not have had a better morning for their landing if it had been made to order.

The atmosphere was as clear as a bell, and the temperature singularly mild and balmy.

The island which was about two miles in circumference was just a great rock covered with light soil, in which grew a few stunted trees among the dried grass.

Choosing a favorable spot near a running stream, Young Klondike's party proceeded to put up the tents, four in number, good, strong affairs, capable of resisting a good deal of weather.

If it proved necessary to stay any length of time, it was Ned's intention to put up a portable house and make everything comfortable, but there was no necessity for it while the weather remained as it was, and a run back to St. Michaels would be needed before it could be done.

As soon as the tents were up and such goods as were needed had been brought ashore, Edith began to prepare breakfast over a good fire built by Dick, for there was plenty of dry wood lying around.

They were just sitting down to breakfast, when Judd appeared on deck.

"Hello, there!" he called. "Come and take me off! I don't want to stay here!"

"Swim over if you want to come," retorted Hugo. "We're busy now."

"Ain't I in it? Ain't I going to have something to eat?" growled Judd.

"Oh, we'd better take him off. What's the use of leaving him there?" said Ned. "Treat the man civilly."

"Do as you like," replied Hugo, "but he's got to give an account of himself. I want to know more about this business of the Twilight, and I mean to do it, too!"

It was the first remark Hugo had made about the matter since the night before, and he left his breakfast, pulled the small boat out to the yacht, and brought Judd into camp.

The diver seemed very grateful for what had been done for him.

He went right up to Ned and held out his hand.

"I want to thank you for saving my life, Young

Klondike," he said. "I should be a dead man now only for you."

"You've nothing to thank me for," replied Ned, quietly. "What I did for you I would have done for anybody, but we would like to know a little more about this affair."

"You can't ask me to tell anything that I won't tell you, boss. What is it that you want to know?"

"There's the man who will ask the questions," replied Ned, pointing to the Unknown.

"Yes, sir; that's what I'm here for," said the detective. He wondered if Judd recognized him, but if he did, he showed it by no sign.

"It was the Twilight," said the man. "We were running down to Russian Island. It was a scurvy trick they played on me to desert me the way they did."

"Who's going to Russian Island, and what in thunder are they going for?" demanded Hugo.

"Some gents what hired me. I don't know what their names are," growled Judd. "Let this here gent question me all he wants to, Hugo! It ain't any business of yours that I know of."

"This settles it between you and me, Judd," said Hugo, angrily. "You'll never work for me again."

"Well, what's the matter? Can't a man do a little business on his own hook, say?"

"I'm waiting to get a chance to speak," said the Unknown. "Perhaps you'll tell me what you expected to do at Russian Island, Judd?"

"I was going down."

"By which you mean diving?"

"Yes."

"What were you going to dive for? Was it pearls, or sunken treasure, or your friend's false teeth that he lost overboard, or a diamond ring, or——"

"Come, now, you are making game of me, boss?"

"Who says so? I'm in dead earnest."

"No nonsense," said Ned, seeing that the Unknown was not likely to make the least headway. "What was it, Judd?"

"Well, I don't know. They wouldn't tell me."

"A likely story," sneered Hugo.

"It's true, though. They hired me to go down, and I was to know what for when I got there, that's all."

And it proved to be all so far as Judd was concerned, for he positively wouldn't tell any more in spite of all the questioning of the Unknown, Hugo and Ned.

"What did I tell you?" said the Unknown, drawing Ned to one side. "We've got a tough subject to deal with—you can see that."

"Better let him alone. He can't do us any harm now. We are a blessed sight safer with him in the camp than we were when he was on the yacht."

"I suppose we are, but all the same it don't seem just right to have him know all our business."

"He knows it now, don't he?"

"Well, he does."

"Then I say go right ahead. It can't be any



worse. Of course we shall keep a sharp watch, and we'll be ready for the Twilight if she comes."

Hugo joined them just then and had his say.

"Boss, I don't like this," he began. "There's something wrong about Judd. He's a crook, anyway, and ought to be made to tell what he knows."

"How are you going to make him?" asked Ned.

"Give it up. Have you any enemies in St. Michaels?"

"I suppose every successful man has his enemies."

"You know something you ain't telling."

"Perhaps I do, but you needn't worry about it. If worse comes to worse, and we find ourselves with a fight on our hands, I suppose you can fight, too?"

"I'll fight for you to the death, just as I would for any other man who means to use me square, as I believe you do," said Hugo, emphatically. "That's the kind of man I am."

"Then we'll go right ahead. Are you prepared to go down to-day?"

"It would be a mistake if we didn't go down to-day. I'm sure we couldn't have a better one."

"That's what I was thinking. Where do you suppose Ricketts made his dive?"

"Why, I know the exact place where we went down to the Dunlap, of course."

"Is the wreck there now?"

"Undoubtedly, if she hasn't broken up."

"But do you suppose she has broken up—that's what I mean."

"Impossible to say. It's soon settled though."

"By going down?"

"Yes."

"You are ready to try it?"

"Any time."

And this conversation was the forerunner of the start at the work.

Inside of half an hour Hugo had made all his preparations, and everybody except Judd went aboard the Minnie.

"You can stay and look after the camp. We are going out to the ledges," Hugo remarked to his former employee.

"Are you going down?" asked Judd.

"That's our business, not yours."

"Now, looker here, Hugo, you needn't be so grouty about it. If you are going down, I should think you'd want me to work the air pump. I understand the business and these fellows don't."

"Oh, don't you fret yourself. We can manage it well enough. I'm done with you, Judd, till you can explain how you came to be on board the Twilight—that's flat."

Judd turned on his heel and walked away.

He seemed very angry, and Ned was not at all satisfied with Hugo's way of handling the man, but he did not care to interfere.

Hugo now ran up the sail and worked the yacht over to a group of ugly ledges a few hundred yards away from the island, dropping anchor there.

"This is the place where the Dunlap went down,"

he said. "She struck right here in a fog, and stove a fearful hole in her bow. It was as ugly a wreck as I ever saw."

"Anyone lost?" asked Edith.

"All hands," replied Hugo.

"Is the water deep here?" asked the Unknown, looking over the side.

"About one hundred and twenty-five feet," replied Hugo. "It's deeper off there, and when I saw the wreck she had worked out that way."

"Is it all sand?" asked Ned.

"That's what it is; and the sand is always shifting. Upon my word, I can't credit the idea that it's going to pay anybody to work it for gold, even if there happens to be any there."

"I don't expect it to pay. That ain't my idea at all."

"What is your idea then?"

"Why, I'm doing this for the benefit of science. I want to be able to prove that there are big washings of gold down the river. It will be a satisfaction to know this, if nothing else."

"Question is whether the game is worth the candle."

"I think it is. I have plenty of money to spend, and I'm willing to spend it this way."

"Which being the case, I'm sure I've no objection to offer," said Hugo, laughing, and he began making his preparations to go down.

The air pump was put in place and Hugo showed Ned how to work it. Then the diver proceeded to don his rubber suit and helmet.

Edith was immensely interested, but no more so than the boys, for this was the first time they had seen a man "go down."

As soon as all was ready, Hugo dropped over the side and disappeared in a twinkling.

All waited breathlessly.

Not a word was spoken, for Ned had to give his full attention to the pump.

For a moment or two there was no movement of the signal line.

Then it was violently agitated, and Ned knew that Hugo was about to come up.

A moment of suspense followed. Then Hugo's helmet appeared above the water, and he signaled to be helped on board the Minnie, in response to which Dick and the Unknown at once lent a hand.

"Well, you won't make much out of this deal, Young Klondike," remarked Hugo, as soon as he got his helmet off.

"What's the matter?" demanded Ned.

"Oh, it's just a hopeless thing. There's no trace of nuggets in the sand down there. I only wish you could see it for yourself."

"Perhaps I shall before I get through. Did you see the wreck?"

"No, I didn't; the wreck seems to have shifted its position. This is where one went down before, but I can't get a sight of it now."

"How far can you see down there?"



"Oh, it ain't easy to see for any great distance under water."

"Then the wreck might be within a stone's throw of you and you not be able to discover it?"

"Decidedly!"

"I don't see anything to be discouraged about. All you have to do is to try it again."

"Oh, I'm not discouraged at all; it ain't that. I expect to go down as many times as you want me to. I'm only giving you fair warning not to build too much on hopes of success."

"I got that warning from you before we started in on this deal."

"I know it. I'm not sure that you appreciate it, though."

"I fully understand it, don't you worry. When are you going down again?"

"Right away. We'll move a little further to the westward. I have an idea that the wreck has shifted that way."

"Of course you can't do much walking on the bottom from the yacht," said Edith. "I should think you'd go down from the boat and let us row slowly along while you explore."

"That's to-morrow's work," replied Hugo. "We'll do that when we come to make a regular hunt for these deep sea nuggets, but I can find the wreck readily enough from the yacht, and it makes it all the more comfortable for you."

After a little further talk, Hugo went down again.

He hardly had time to touch the bottom, when Ned got the signal to pull up.

Hugo had something in his rubber glove when he came to the surface, and as he waved his hand they saw it glitter.

"Gold!" cried Dick. "He's struck it at last."

He handed it to the Unknown as they helped him aboard.

"Quartz rock bristling with gold," cried the detective. "By the Jumping Jeremiah, we're getting there at last."

He passed it over to Ned who burst out laughing, and he was still at it when Hugo's helmet came off.

"How's that?" demanded the diver. "There's a big ledge of that stuff down there. I managed to break off a piece. It's all alike."

"All alike worthless then," replied Ned. "It's only fool's gold."

"Iron pyrites?"

"Exactly."

"Ye gods and little fishes, no! That's surely gold!" exclaimed the Unknown, seizing the specimen from Ned's hand, and examining it again.

"It surely isn't," declared Ned, positively. "It's yellow pyrites and looks enough like gold to be the genuine article, but it's nothing of the sort."

"What then?"

"Only sulphur and ore."

"And worth nothing?"

"Nothing at all."

"That's interesting," said Hugo; "then it seems I'm fooled."

"That's what's the matter."

"I'll go down again now. I ain't going to give it up so."

Hugo was gone longer this time than before.

Edith began to feel decidedly alarmed for his safety, and even Young Klondike, who had the greatest confidence in Hugo's ability to take care of himself under water, heartily wished he would come up.

All at once they got the signal, and next it was Hugo himself.

"I'm dished!" he exclaimed, when they got his helmet off. "If there are any nuggets in these deep sea diggings I can't find them."

Here was a discouraging announcement.

It began to look very much as though Young Klondike's great expedition in search of deep sea diggings had failed.

## CHAPTER V.

### YOUNG KLONDIKE'S RICH STRIKE UNDER THE SEA.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, anybody but you would be ready to drop on this, Young Klondike," was the Unknown's remark, when they all returned to Duck Island for dinner; "but I suppose you have no idea of doing anything of the kind."

"Not the faintest," laughed Ned. "We've only just begun, as you know very well. Why, I haven't been down myself yet."

"Are you really going down, Mr. Golden?" asked Hugo.

"I certainly am. You haven't seen my diving-suit nor any of my traps."

"That sounds like business."

"I mean business."

"Ever been down?"

"Never."

"Humph!"

"Don't sneer at a beginner. I had never dug for gold until I came to the Klondike. I think I may say I've made a fair success out of that."

"It's a very different thing from diving. That's a trade."

"Who taught you, Hugo?"

"Oh, I taught myself."

"I thought so. You can teach me."

"Better not begin your studies this time of year, boss."

Hugo gave this advice earnestly enough, and was quite sincere in it.

But Young Klondike wouldn't listen.

He determined to begin his diving lessons that very afternoon.

They ate dinner and prepared to return to the ledges.

The man, Judd, meanwhile made himself quite



agreeable. He seemed a quiet sort of fellow, naturally, and without being asked he took right hold and relieved Edith of the cooking and constituted himself servant to the party.

"I may as well be useful as well as ornamental, Hugo," he said. "Seeing as I'm here I prefer to work."

After dinner they returned to the ledges, leaving Judd behind on the island.

This time they did not go out on the yacht, but took the two small boats which had been brought along for this very purpose.

In one the air pump was placed; Hugo, Ned and the Unknown went in that.

Dick and Edith pulled out in the other more to see what was going on than anything else.

"We'd better get further along the line of the ledge," declared Young Klondike. "My idea is that the constant rush of water from the Yukon has worked the wreck out seaward; perhaps it may have buried it in the sand."

"It's very likely, still we may strike it. I think your idea is a very good one, boss."

"You pick out a good place, Hugo."

"Well, if you want my idea of it, I say right off that big rock where the sea is breaking."

"Isn't it rather rough there?"

"That's only on the surface. It ain't a bit rougher than any other place underneath."

"All right; we'll try it right there, then."

"You're bound to go, Ned?" asked the Unknown, anxiously.

"Yes, I am! Don't say another word about it. We've discussed that point to a finish, you know."

This was true enough; the matter had been fully talked over.

When Young Klondike made up his mind to do a thing, he did it; there was no turning him.

Everything was made ready; the boat was anchored and the depth of water ascertained.

It proved to be a little over a hundred feet.

Ned got into the diving-suit as coolly as if diving had been something he was long accustomed to, and when Hugo put on his helmet and given his last instructions he boldly went over the side.

The first rush down brought tremendous sensations; ringing in the ears, curious tingling feelings in the hands and feet, and terrible oppression when the bottom was reached.

Seconds seemed like minutes, but little by little Young Klondike grew used to it, and was able to look around him through the window in the helmet.

He could see rocks and sand, and then all at once a big fish flew past and another came and seemed to stare in at the window of the helmet, as though wondering what sort of strange creature was inside.

But it seemed a perfectly hopeless case to look for gold here among these sands, and after moving about a bit along the base of the ledge Young Klondike gave it up, and attending to the weights gave the signal to be drawn up.

Dick had his boat alongside when the helmet came off and everybody had a great deal to say, congratulating Ned on the coolness he had shown and the complete success of his first dive.

"Never saw anyone take so naturally to it in my life," declared Hugo. "By gracious, Mr. Golden, I believe you'd make an expert diver in a month's time, but if I was you I wouldn't try it again to-day."

"Indeed I shall," replied Ned. "I'm game for another try as soon as I get my breath."

Ned stuck to his purpose and went down four times before he gave it up.

The fourth time the anchor was drawn up and Ned walked quite a distance on the bottom, the boat following his movements.

He had now grown pretty well used to it, and experienced no disagreeable sensations.

His object was to turn the corner of the ledge and get round on the other side, in the hope of finding the wreck.

The move was a complete success. Ned walked boldly forward, descending a slope as he turned the rocks.

Instantly he beheld the dark outline of a ship before him. It was the wreck of the Dunlap. He could read the name on the stern.

The ship lay over against the ledge, and seemed to be in very perfect condition.

Ned made no effort to board her, but contented himself with taking a careful view of the situation.

He saw that he was standing on the edge of a deep depression in the bottom. If the wreck had not lodged where it had, it must have dropped to a depth of fully fifty feet more, for it seemed at least that distance to the bottom of the depression.

As to the circumference of this big hole, for it was nothing more, Ned could only guess at it. He did not attempt to descend then, for he was beginning to feel much oppressed, but a deep sense of triumph filled his mind. It was just such holes that he was looking for.

Ned had been reading up mining matters attentively for some time past. He felt certain that if he was to find his deep sea diggings anywhere this was just the place.

He gave the signal and returned to the boat, but said nothing of his latest discovery.

There was great enthusiasm when he told about the wreck.

"By gracious, you're a wonder, Young Klondike," declared Hugo. "Still, I expected this. I said you'd find the old Dunlap. Luck seems to run your way."

Hugo went down then and boarded the wreck.

"I don't believe she's shifted much," he declared, when he came back into the boat. "My opinion is that I've made a mistake in my position. I don't believe the ship has moved twenty feet."

This was still more satisfactory to Young Klondike. If Hugo was correct in his idea, then Jack Ricketts must have gone down at this very point.



That night Ned dreamed of deep sea nuggets, which was not at all strange.

The night passed quietly and another pleasant morning dawned.

Judd was up busy at the fire preparing breakfast.

Ned bade him good-morning pleasantly and went to call Hugo. He was much concerned when he found the diver feeling decidedly sick.

"I must have caught cold," said Hugo. "My head aches terribly, and I'm as stiff as an old man."

Ned at once decided that there must be no diving on Hugo's part that day, and he said so, but he was determined that the work should not be delayed.

Accordingly, right after breakfast, the boats went out to the ledges.

"I can go down just as well without Hugo's help as with it," declared Ned. "I'm up to the business now. The Unknown can help me with my helmet and work the air pump all right."

"It's a great shame that I can't do something to help," said Dick.

"That's right," added Edith. "Dick and I seem to be doing all the heavy looking on."

"Why, there's nothing else for you to do," replied Ned. "For that matter, you needn't come at all unless you have a mind to."

But neither Dick nor Edith would hear to anything of the sort. They were both determined to be on the spot when Ned went down.

The same point was chosen, and Ned soon found himself dropping into the deep sea again.

By this time he had become pretty well used to the sensation, and knew exactly how to handle himself.

He was soon standing alongside the wreck.

Now came the difficult part of it.

He must descend the slope and make the bottom of the hole.

But Ned had prepared for all this. The air tube had been lengthened by fully seventy-five feet, and the Unknown had his instructions.

Dick, who knew nothing of Ned's intentions, was greatly disturbed when he saw the tube suddenly begin to pay out.

"What's the matter?" he cried, bringing his boat alongside the other. "Is there anything wrong?"

"Nothing at all," replied the Unknown, quietly.

"But look at the air tube."

"That's all right. Ned is simply going down deeper—that's all."

"You are sure it's all right?" asked Edith.

"Perfectly sure. That's what we lengthened out the tube for—Ned expected this."

Edith held her breath as the tube continued to run out. It seemed an awful situation to her. Most heartily did she wish that Ned was safe back in the boat again.

But Ned was not wishing for anything of the sort just then. He was full of enthusiasm. It seemed to him that the fulfillment of his hopes was at hand.

The descent into the hole was gradual, and easily made. In a few moments Ned was at the bottom,

and experienced no more difficulty in breathing or handling himself than he had done when above at the wreck.

When he came to the bottom he peered about curiously. He was standing on a broad, level stretch as smooth as a floor, and over the surface was strewn oddly-shaped objects of a dull, dirty yellow. Eagerly Young Klondike seized one.

It was gold!

The paying out of the air tube had ceased now, and there was still twenty-five feet to spare.

"Is he all right? Do you think he's all right, Zed?" cried Edith, who was growing more and more nervous every moment.

"To be sure he's all right," replied the detective. "Why shouldn't he be? Ned knows well enough how to handle himself, although I tell you what's a fact. I wouldn't stand in his shoes not for a thousand dollar bill."

"Then you don't propose to go down?" asked Dick.

"You bet I don't."

"I do, though. If this dive turns out all right I'm going to try my luck next time."

"It will turn out all right, and don't you forget it. I feel it in the bottom of my boots that this trip down into the deep, deep sea is going to be a success. If you don't believe me why—thunder! There comes the signal! The boy is on the rise."

The Unknown began to haul in on his air tube.

Breathlessly Dick and Edith watched, and after a moment Ned appeared above the surface, clutching something in his rubber glove.

He caught hold of the boat and motioned to the Unknown to remove his helmet, which the detective immediately proceeded to do.

"Have you struck it?" cried Dick, leaning over to have a look.

"Eureka!" shouted Young Klondike, holding up a nugget as big as a cocoanut. "Struck it—yes! I've located the deep sea diggings; there's barrels of nuggets where I found this!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### JUDD PLAYS A TREACHEROUS TRICK.

It would be difficult to determine which was the most excited at Ned Golden's startling announcement, Dick or the Unknown.

"Is it really so? Is the game really worth the candle?" cried the detective, as he handled the nugget.

"Do you know I can scarcely believe it yet?"

"Straight goods, though," laughed Ned. "Let me see it. I haven't had a fair look myself."

The nugget was broken and mixed with quartz, as most big nuggets are, but it was not rough on its edges like those worked out of the ground.

On the contrary, its edges were smooth and pol-



ished, and showed plainly its contact with the sea. The gold had a reddish shade, and did not altogether resemble the gold of the Klondike.

As Ned studied it, he made up his mind that it must originally have come from some other place.

"And are there really plenty of them down there, Ned?" asked Dick.

"Thousands upon thousands. They are scattered all over the bottom of the hole."

Ned gave a full explanation of what he had discovered.

"It's a big thing," said the detective. "We ought to form a company to work our deep sea diggings, right away."

"Which I never shall do," replied Ned. "Of course there would be money in it, but think of the capital necessary to work this find on a large scale, and the trouble and botheration it would involve. No, sir, none of that business in my plate. We can hang on here till the weather changes and get up what we can. Then I go back up the river to Dawson City. Anyhow we want to catch the steamer due at St. Michaels this day week. If we don't we are liable to be left over until next spring, and that wouldn't suit me at all."

"Let me go down and have a look," said Dick. "I'm dying to try my hand at this thing."

"Not now," replied Ned. "You'll have to begin small, same as I did. I don't believe you could ever stand it, to go down into that deep hole."

But Dick was determined to try it, and they were obliged to let him have his way.

He failed to get further than the wreck, however, and soon gave the signal to be hauled up again.

"That will do for a starter," he said, when Ned took off the helmet. "To-morrow I'll take another look at it. I shan't rest till I get down to the deep sea diggings, that's sur."

They now returned to the island, and surprised Hugo by a sight of the nugget.

"Upon my word, I never would have believed it," declared the diver. "There's no use talking, Young Klondike, you are a wonder! Everything you touch turns to gold."

"I don't talk through my hat, anyhow," replied Ned, triumphantly. "There's plenty of gold down there, Hugo, and my theory has been proved correct. We must get up at least enough to pay expenses, but I believe we can do a great deal more than that. It's my opinion that this little expedition of ours is going to pay handsomely. After we leave the deep sea diggings belong to you, and you have my full permission to work them for all they are worth. I shall never bother Duck Island again."

Judd saw the nugget and listened to all the talk as he sat smoking his pipe on a rock near the tent, but he never said a word.

There was no more diving done that day as Hugo continued to feel poorly, but next morning the diver was all right and they were early at the ledges and work on the deep sea diggings began in earnest.

It was decided that Ned and Hugo should go down together.

A basket was attached to a long rope and Hugo undertook to take it down with him. It was to be filled with nuggets if they were successful in finding the place.

Ned was first down. He struck in by the wreck and walked down into the hole as before.

There were the nuggets lying scattered all about him just as he had seen them the day before.

There were many thousand in sight, and as far as the eye could reach in that obscured light they were still visible.

Ned looked around for Hugo, but he was not to be seen as yet.

Suddenly a shadow was thrown across his path, and looking up he saw Hugo and the basket coming down directly into the hole.

Ned wondered what he thought of it all, but, of course, there was no such thing as seeing his face.

For a moment Hugo stood motionless, turning this way and that, studying the situation.

Then he pointed to the basket and signaled to the Unknown, who was working the other end of the line to pull it up a little.

The detective responded to the signal all right, and they soon had the basket breast high and both went to work to load it up.

Ned wondered if the Unknown was going to be able to pull it up, they filled it up so full. He would have stopped, but Hugo was determined to go ahead.

When the signal was given, up went the basket as easy as possible. It is hard to realize that weights are less in the water than the air.

Young Klondike and Hugo did not follow the basket immediately. It had been arranged to signal each other if either desired to ascend, but Ned felt perfectly comfortable, and saw no reason for going up.

Presently the basket came flying down again, ballasted with stones which had been brought out from the island for that purpose.

These were speedily tumbled out and the work of refilling began.

Four times the basket went up before Ned began to feel even the slightest oppression.

After the fourth load he gave Hugo the signal, and they ascended to the boat.

Dick was fairly wild over the success of the work.

"This is the easiest mining yet!" he cried. "No frost fires, no digging. Nothing to do but to pick up the nuggets. Why, there must be ten or fifteen thousand dollars' worth here already. This is simply immense!"

It was about all the two boats could safely carry, and they pulled over to the island at once.

Judd met them on the shore in a high state of excitement.

"You don't mean to say that you got all them out of the sea?" he cried.

"That's just what we did!" replied Hugo. "You



never did any such profitable diving as this, Judd, and you never will."

"Who says I won't!" growled Judd. "Ain't you going to let me in on this deal?"

"Well, hardly," said the Unknown. "Considering what I know about you, Mr. Man, you ought to be mighty well satisfied that we've treated you as well as we have."

"What do you know about me? What have I done?"

"I'll take a day off and tell you," laughed the detective. "Meantime look out that you keep your fingers off this gold."

Judd made no reply, but filling his pipe walked sulkily away.

There was mischief in his eye, and the detective ought to have seen it, but the Unknown was too much interested in nuggets just then to pay very much attention to Judd.

After dinner they went out to the ledge again, and managed to secure another boat load of nuggets before nightfall.

It was now apparent that they were going to be able to load down the yacht with all the gold it was safe to carry in her, before the end of another day.

Nothing could have been more successful than this venture of the deep sea diggings.

"We'll carry a hundred thousand dollars back to St. Michaels with us," declared Ned. "Hugo, you shall not only have your pay, but come in equally with us on the deal."

"And where do I come in?" asked Judd, who sat in front of the tent smoking at the time, and overheard this remark.

"You don't come in at all, but you come out at the little end of the horn," laughed the Unknown.

That night when it came time to turn in, Judd was missing.

Dick discovered it first, and they got lanterns and started to hunt the island over for the man, as it was quite impossible that he could have left it unless he had drowned himself, and nobody cared to go to sleep with the mystery unsolved.

They did not succeed in finding Judd, but they did find the remains of a fire built on the furthestmost point of the island.

They had seen the light of this fire when they started out, and of course, went directly for it believing the man to be there.

"That's a signal," declared the detective. "He believes his friends to be cruising about heresomewhere and he wants to let them know where he is."

When they got back to the camp, there was Judd sitting in front of the tent smoking his pipe as usual.

"Where in thunder have you been?" demanded the Unknown.

"Taking a walk," growled Judd.

"Did you light that fire over on the point?"

"Yes, I did."

"What for?"

"'Cause I was cold and wanted to warm myself."

"That isn't the reason."

"Who says it isn't?"

"I say so."

"And I say it is."

"That fire is a signal?"

"Who would I be signaling, boss? Them fellers who tried to drown me? I guess I ain't such a fool."

Judd seemed to sleep peacefully enough all that night, but the Unknown remained constantly on the watch.

It was a waste of time.

He might just as well have gone to sleep, for nothing unusual occurred.

Next morning Judd went about his work as usual.

Hugo and the Unknown both questioned him about his conduct the night before, but could not get much out of the man.

His replies were surly and unsatisfactory, and they had to give it up.

"Dick and I will stay and watch," said Edith; "the rest of you can go out to the ledges same as usual. We are not any actual use there, anyhow, so it won't make a bit of difference. We'll be on hand if Judd tries any tricks."

This arrangement was accordingly carried out, and Young Klondike, with Hugo and the Unknown, went out to the deep sea diggings again.

Both went down and the Unknown undertook to run the air pump and basket.

Nuggets were as plenty as ever in the hole, and the basket was almost full when all at once Ned felt the signal line violently jerked.

Something had happened. The Unknown was calling him up.

Ned's heart almost ceased to beat, for he thought that the trouble must be with the air pump.

He immediately motioned to Hugo that he was going to rise, and attending to the weights went shooting up through the water, and was soon in the boat.

He could hardly wait for the Unknown to get off the helmet in his anxiety.

"What's the matter?" he asked, but he knew before the Unknown could answer.

The yacht was moving away from Duck Island under full sail.

"Treachery!" cried the Unknown. "That's Judd's work! Heaven help Edith—she's aboard!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### CHASING THE MINNIE.

"GET up Hugo instantly! We must follow the Minnie without losing a moment!"

"Work's begun and half done," said the Unknown, as Young Klondike gave this hurried order. "Ned, we never ought to have done it—'twasn't right!"



"Done what?"

"Left Edith and Dick exposed to that treacherous fellow alone. I knew what he was. I shall never cease to blame myself if anything serious occurs!"

Something very serious had occurred and there was clearly no time to talk about it.

Indeed the Unknown was not wasting time. He worked as he talked.

Already he had given the signal to Hugo and a moment later the diver joined them in the boat.

He was wild with rage when he found what Judd had done.

From that moment the Unknown dropped his suspicions of Hugo, and as they hastily pulled away from the ledges he told him the story of his adventure in the St. Michaels saloon.

"You ought to have told me all this before," declared Hugo. "That fellow ought to have been shot."

"Never mind what has been," said Ned. "We've got to deal with what is. Martin Toner is at the bottom of this. Judd has been able to communicate with him. That signal fire last night did the work."

"Even so; and we weren't sharp enough to tumble to it," groaned the Unknown. "Ye gods and little fishes! I ain't fit to be a detective. Somebody ought to kick me out of the boat!"

"Stop it!" cried Ned sternly. "What's the use talking? Think of some way of getting around this thing if you can."

"We need a sail," said Hugo.

"Alas for a sail! Where can we get one?" groaned the Unknown.

"Pull to the island," said Ned. "Don't lose an instant! Pull for all you are worth!"

Never did a small boat get over the waters at the mouth of the Yukon faster than Young Klondike's boat went then.

No more was said, for Ned had shown pretty plainly that he was in no mood for talk.

Besides, all were watching the yacht which was shooting off among the islands. In a few moments it would be out of sight, and besides the difficulty of chasing the swift sailing craft would come the difficulty of knowing where she had gone.

But Ned did not despair by any means.

He thought fast and reasoned it out that Judd would not be likely to go very far away.

If the Unknown's report was true, the scheme of Martin Toner was blackmail pure and simple.

This made Ned feel more secure about Dick and Edith.

"He'll not kill them," he thought, with Judd in his mind. "His idea is just to turn them over to Toner's tender mercies and make me pay through the nose. That's the how of it, sure. I won't get excited. If I keep cool I can head them off yet."

As they neared the island Young Klondike gave his orders.

"Hugo, you cut down one of those little spruce trees and lop off the branches," he said. "We are

going to cut up one of the tents and use the pieces for sails. If one blows away on us we'll have others to immediately put into its place. Zed, you look to the tent and make the sail while I rig up the ropes."

"A splendid idea!" declared the detective. "We're going to get there, and when we do, let Judd look out."

"Don't count your chickens before they are hatched. We'll make a big try for it, though. Don't you forget that."

They were on the island a few moments later.

Not an instant was lost.

Hugo seized the ax and went to work to make a mast; the Unknown tackled the tent, and Ned proceeded to get his ropes in shape.

So rapidly did they work, that inside of fifteen minutes they were on the water again with a very respectable mast and sail in full chase of the Minnie, which had now disappeared.

No discovery had been made in the camp to indicate how Dick and Edith came to be captured.

As a matter of fact there was nothing to discover, for Judd made a very neat job.

For a little while after Young Klondike's party left for the ledges, Dick and Edith sat talking over their great find near the tent.

When Dick looked around for Judd he found that the fellow had vanished, and as he had seen him standing near the spare boat he immediately assumed that he had gone aboard the yacht.

"This won't do!" he exclaimed. "I won't have him prowling about there."

"Hello! Hello on board the Minnie!" shouted Dick.

Judd appeared on deck in answer to the summons.

"What's the matter?" he asked sulkily.

"Come back ashore at once. Where's the boat?"

"Around on the other side here—anything the matter with me going aboard the yacht?"

"I don't want you to—that's all. Come back."

"All right, boss. Anything to suit," growled Judd, and he pulled ashore in the boat.

Dick stood carelessly watching him. Edith at the time was in the tent attending to some domestic affairs.

It would have been a bad day for Judd if the brave girl had seen him suddenly throw a lasso about Dick's neck—she would have shot him as sure as fate.

That is the way Dick was caught. It came upon him suddenly as he turned to walk back to the tent. The rope dropped about his neck, and the noose was pulled tight before the boy could get up his hands to stop it.

The next Dick knew he was struggling on the ground, choking under the noose.

There was not even time to call to Edith. Dick was black in the face when Judd got to him, and became unconscious a moment later.

The next he knew he was lying in his bunk in the cabin of the Minnie. The yacht was flying off among the islands at full speed.



Dick felt terribly chagrined. He was bound hand and foot and could not make a move to help himself, and as he looked about he could see Edith in the same disagreeable situation lying in the Unknown's bunk on the opposite side of the cabin.

"Edith!" he called. "Oh, Edith!"

"Dick! Thank Heaven! He said you were dead!" came the reply from the other bunk.

Edith tried to rise, but was not able to do it; she was altogether too securely bound.

"I'm very far from dead," replied Dick. "Judd captured me and nearly choked me, Edith. You're not bound, are you? Don't tell me that or I shall go mad. Oh, what will Ned say to all this?"

"Keep cool, Dick. We were taken off our guard, both of us. Judd lassoed me. I suppose he served you the same way."

"He did. I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself. I wouldn't have believed I could be so careless. Tell me, are you hurt?"

"Not a bit! He just tied me up and brought me aboard the Minnie. Oh, Dick, if I could only work my hands out of these cords!"

"I'm trying the same game, Edith, but I don't seem to succeed."

"We must succeed! You and I ought to be good for Judd if we could get a fair show at him."

"You bet I'll try if I get any show! How long have I been lying here?"

"It's about ten minutes since I came aboard, Dick."

"Then we've just started?"

"Yes; Judd said you were dead and it drove me almost wild. Oh, I feel so sorry for Ned. He'll be just about crazy when he sees the Minnie sailing away."

"He'll follow us, of course."

"How can he when he's only got the row-boat?"

"Don't you fret. He or the Unknown will devise some way. Is Judd alone on the yacht, or did someone come to help him do this dirty work?"

"He's alone as far as I know. Hark! He's coming now!"

"Yes, and he's drunk, as sure as you live!"

"He's got at Hugo's whisky, I guess."

"That's what! Keep still; let me do the talking."

"Hello, down there. Are you all alive?" called Judd hoarsely, coming down the cabin stairs with uncertain step.

"Hello, Judd! Come down and see," replied Dick, assuming a calmness which he certainly did not feel.

"Well, ain't I a-coming?" growled Judd, thickly. "Can't stay long, though; I've lashed the wheel and the sail's as full of wind as an egg is of meat. Gee whiz! If a flaw was to happen to strike the Minnie now over we'd go—then we'd all be in the soup."

With a drunken laugh Judd reeled into the cabin, lost his balance and fell on his nose.

"Come, brace up," said Dick. "Get on your feet

and stay there, if you can. What's the meaning of all this?"

"What's the meaning of it?" growled Judd, helping himself up by the aid of the table leg. "That's what's the meaning of it. Cold business. I came down here to the mouth of the Yukon to capture Miss Edith and I've captured her, only thing I regret is that I had to take you, too."

"What do you propose to do with us? Are we to be turned over to Martin Toner?"

"That's what! Who was telling you?"

"Never mind that. What's the price, Judd?"

"What's the price! What price? What do you mean?"

"The price of your treachery—oh, you understand me well enough!"

"Well, now, Mr. Luckey, look here, are you on the bid?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, now, I thought of that, too. Toner's over on Walrus Island a-waiting for me. I got the signal from him last night."

"Stick to the subject, Judd. What's the price?"

"Why, you see I don't want to go back on my bargain, but on the other hand Toner deserted me, and I don't feel none too pleasaat about it, that's right."

"Will you tell me his bid? I suppose you are out for the stuff?"

"You bet I am. His bid was a hundred dollars. Not much, is it? Ha, ha, ha!"

"So little that I'll give you a thousand if you'll set us free."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Judd. "That's a good joke. You don't seem to be able to see a hole through a brick. Ho, ho, ho!"

"What do you mean? Explain yourself. I've got dollars where Martin Toner has got cents."

"Yes, but how about the gold on board? Ain't that in my possession? What's your paltry thousand dollars? No more to me, boss, than Toner's beggarly hundred. Ha, ha, ha! Toner is on Walrus Island waiting for me. Let him wait. I ain't going there. I've got all I want in these deep sea nuggets. I'm going into the business for myself."

"Then what do you intend to do?" asked Dick, striving to keep cool. "Explain yourself. If I can meet your proposition I'm ready to do it."

"Meet nothing!" growled Judd. "I'm going to deal with Young Klondike. I can make better terms with him than I can with you."

So thought this drunken scoundrel as he staggered up out of the cabin, but never was a man more mistaken.

Judd was not to deal with Young Klondike that day in the way he thought.

Taking his place at the wheel, he proceeded to unleash it and hold his course between the two small islands.

As he did so he looked behind him, getting a good view of the islands which lie at the mouth of the Yukon.



Just then a shot rang out in the distance.

Looking off toward a large island, Judd could see the smoke of a rifle, and at the same time caught sight of a man waving something white from the top of a high rock.

"That's Toner!" he chuckled. "He, he, he. He thinks I'm coming in! He never'll get left any worse than he's going to get left now."

He gave his wheel a twist, and shot off in the other direction. This gave him a view of the course the Minnie had been covering, and he caught sight of a small boat carrying a monstrous sail flying toward him at a tremendous rate of speed.

"B'gosh, they're following me!" gasped Judd. "It's Young Klondike, sure's guns!"

He watched the boat for a few moments, and then turned to watch the man on the island again.

This because two other shots were fired.

The man stood on the rock, shaking his fist at the Minnie and waving his gun.

This threw Judd into convulsions of laughter, but he checked himself when he took another look at the approaching boat.

It had drawn very much nearer. If Judd had been possessed of a glass he might have been able to distinguish Young Klondike in the bows.

"B'gosh, they're gaining," he growled. "If they happen to come near enough to give me a shot it might be unpleasant. Guess I'll give her a little more sail; but before I do it I'll just take another drink."

He pulled a bottle out of his pocket and turned it up, taking a long nip.

As he was about to put the cork in, the bottle slipped from his unsteady grasp and fell on the deck.

"Great snakes! There's good whisky going to waste!" gasped the drunken wretch.

He let go the wheel and made a dive for the bottle. Just then the yacht gave a lunge and it slipped under the guard rail.

"B'gosh, I'll get it!" growled Judd, and he leaned over the rail.

All in an instant his head went down and his heels went up.

Then there was no Judd, but the Minnie, caught now in the full rush of that strong ebb tide at the mouth of the Yukon, went flying seaward with Young Klondike's frail craft in full pursuit.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WRECKED ON THE BULL'S HEAD.

GREAT was the excitement on board Young Klondike's boat, when they first caught sight of the Minnie.

"We are gaining on him! By the Jumping Jeremiah, we are gaining on him!" cried the Unknown. "Let him look out! I'll have his heart if it takes a leg!"

"A leg for a heart would be a good exchange in this case," chuckled Hugo. "But it is as you say; we are certainly gaining on the Minnie. There's no doubt at all about that."

"Do you see anything of Dick or Edith, dear boy?" the detective called out.

Ned was at the bow, taking in everything through his glass.

"No, I can't," he replied. "I can't see a soul."

"That can't be," said the detective. "Of course Judd must be there."

"He may be there, but as I said before I can't see him. The deck seems to be deserted."

"Let me come forward and have a look!" exclaimed the Unknown.

"Not on your life! Stay where you are!" said Hugo hastily. "Do you want to upset the boat?"

"Well, I ain't particularly anxious about that—no!"

"That's what you are going to do, then, if you don't mind your eye."

"Do sit quiet, Zed," called Young Klondike. "If I can't see anybody through the glass, how do you expect to? Are your eyes any better than mine?"

"Perhaps not; still one may see what another can't."

"I'm doing all right. I tell you there's nobody on the deck."

"Perhaps Judd has gone below."

"That's hardly likely; would he leave the Minnie to take care of herself?"

"It is what he has done, though," said Hugo, looking out. "I'm so familiar with the Minnie that I can see more on her deck with the naked eye than another might with a glass. I tell you Judd isn't there."

"But we are gaining on her all the same," said Ned. "If we can hold out as we are going, we'll overhaul her in just no time."

"I wonder what it can mean?" mused the detective. "Yes, I wouldn't wonder a bit if it was that."

"What?" asked Ned. "What are you driving at now?"

"That Judd had deserted the yacht."

"Turned her adrift?"

"Yes."

"Nonsense!"

"Hello! There he is now!" cried Hugo, suddenly.

Judd had just come staggering on deck and Hugo saw him without the glass.

"Yes, he's there," said Young Klondike, after a moment, "and from the way he carries himself I should say he was pretty well boozed."

"That wouldn't be strange," said Hugo. "Does he see us?"

"I think he does."

"Thunder! What's that?" cried the detective, as a shot rang out.

This was the beginning of the happenings already described.

They were highly interesting to Young Klondike and his friends, as may well be supposed.



They saw Martin Toner on the island signaling the Minnie, and through his glass Ned was able to recognize him.

There was another man with him, although Judd had not discovered this.

All this time they were gaining steadily on the yacht.

Hugo proved himself a perfect expert at sailing the boat, and it certainly looked as if they were going to overhaul the Minnie in a very short time, when all at once Ned shouted:

"Look! Look! There he goes! He's overboard as sure as fate!"

Hugo and the Unknown leaned forward to have a look.

"I can't see him? Are you sure?" demanded the detective.

"Sure! Of course I'm sure! I would say so if I wasn't. I saw him go."

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, I hope he drowns, then."

"Think about Dick and Edith!" cried Ned. "If they are prisoners in the cabin what's to become of them with no one left to guide the yacht."

"As true as you live that's the situation," said Hugo. "Judd ain't on the deck, and the Minnie is heading straight for those ledges. She's bound to be wrecked on the Bull's Head unless she changes her course."

"That's what's the matter, if you call those rocks the Bull's Head," Young Klondike replied. "What can we do?"

"Nothing but wait," said Hugo. "There's going to be trouble all around, I'm thinking. See, the fog is rolling in."

"It's all up with Judd and serves him right," said the detective; "by the Jumping Jeremiah, this is a pretty state of affairs."

Silence now came upon them all—it was eyes right on the yacht.

In a moment the situation changed again—changed as suddenly as the weather changes there at the mouth of the Yukon, where once the fog gets started it takes a wonderfully short time for it to obscure everything.

Just such was the case now.

The fog came sweeping in with a rush.

In a moment the Minnie had disappeared from view. Whether she had escaped the Bull's Head or not, it was quite impossible to determine.

Hugo grimly declared that it would be a good job if they escaped it themselves.

"Look sharp!" said Ned. "It won't do Dick and Edith any good if we go under. I'm thinking more about them than I am of ourselves."

"I'll do my best," replied Hugo. "Hark! Wasn't that a cry for help?"

"Sounded most deucedly like one," said the detective. "There it goes again!"

There was no mistaking it this time. It was a call

for help, and it came from the water just ahead of them.

"I must be Judd!" exclaimed the Unknown. "Look alive, Ned!"

"Thought you were going to let him drown?" said Ned, seizing a rope and peering through the fog.

"Oh, of course I didn't mean that. I don't want to see anyone drown, and besides, if we get him we may find out something about Dick and Edith. Keep your eye peeled."

"Well, that's what I'm doing. Don't talk to me now; it distracts my attention."

Ned leaned as far over the bow as he dared.

"Hello! hello!" he shouted.

"Hello! Help me for Heaven's sake!" came the answer from the water.

They were close to the drowning Judd now, for, of course, it was he who gave the cry for help.

The water had sobered the wretch, and when Ned's shout came, hope came with it. Judd was all ready to be saved.

He was a good swimmer, of course, for diving was his business, and as a consequence was a hard man to drown.

As soon as he got the bearings of the boat he began working his way into its course, shouting again and again.

Ned answered each hail, and kept a sharp lookout for the drowning man.

Suddenly the Unknown saw the rope fly, and knew that the critical moment had come.

When he saw Judd he was clutching the other end of the rope, and holding on for dear life.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, it's Judd sure enough!" he cried. "Haul him in, Ned. Here, I'll lend you a hand!"

It was hardly necessary, for Judd was entirely able to help himself.

The next they knew he was coming over the side of the boat, and he managed it so skillfully that it was scarcely tipped at all.

He sank down in the boat all breathless, and for a few moments no one said a word.

"Well, you're a nice one," growled Hugo, at last. "By gracious, I'd like to knock your brains out! Are Mr. Luckey and Miss Edith on board the yacht?"

"That's what they are," growled Judd. "I only wish I was. Oh, gee! I'm about used up with all I've been through."

"It's a blessed pity then that you didn't make a clean job of it," said the Unknown. "What do you want to live for anyhow, such a feller as you? Ye gods and little fishes, you couldn't even drown respectably like anyone else—no!"

"Don't be so danged hard on a fellow," replied Judd, dismally. "I don't know as I owe you anything—come now, do I?"

"If you don't owe me anything then I owe you more'n a month's licking would pay—come now—don't I?"

"What's the matter? I ain't done nothing. Say,



have you got any whisky about you, any of you gents—it don't matter which? I'm just dying for a drink."

"Look to your sail, Hugo!" said Ned; "the wind has all died away. We shall be on the ledges first thing you know."

But Hugo was fully alive to the situation.

The wind which had blown the fog up the mouth of the Yukon had now died away entirely, and there was every evidence that the fog had come to stay.

Perhaps this was what made Ned so patient with the Unknown's roundabout way of questioning. He knew that there was nothing to be done but to keep a sharp lookout ahead, and that he was doing all the time.

Meanwhile, the Unknown continued to question Judd in his own way.

Were Dick and Edith prisoners on the Minnie? was his next inquiry.

Judd repudiated the suggestion most indignantly.

"Prisoners; no indeed! What put that idea into your head?" he whined.

"Do you mean to tell me you didn't carry them off on the yacht?" demanded the detective. "Do you think I'm crazy, man?"

"I should have been a fool to think of such a thing!" whined Judd. "Certainly I didn't. Mr. Luckey asked me to run up by the Bull's Head with him, and of course I did it—that's all."

"Rats, rubbish! As though you could play that game on us! What would he want to go away from Duck Island for?"

"Said he had an idea that there might be gold on the Bull's Head—he wanted to have a look."

"That won't go down! Where were they when you fell overboard?"

"In the cabin talking over business."

"You're a wretched liar, that's what you are!" said Ned.

"Why, of course he is," added Hugo—"a liar of the worst kind; but I didn't think he was such a fool!"

Hugo had scarcely made this remark when Ned sprang up in the bow with a wild shout.

"Look out! Look out!" he yelled; "we are right on the rocks!"

But the warning came too late.

Before they had time to think the frail craft went crashing on the ledges, staving her bow to splinters.

The mischief was done now.

In less time than it takes to tell it all hands were floundering in the water.

"Now I've done it!" gasped Hugo, scrambling up upon the rocks. "I've run you straight onto the Bull's Head."

## CHAPTER IX.

### EDITH WORKS A LITTLE DIGGINGS ON HER OWN ACCOUNT.

WHILE misfortune was coming to Young Klondike's party, Dick and Edith were lying quietly in their

bunks on board the yacht—quiet because they could not very well be otherwise, for they were tied up so tight that it was next to impossible to move an inch.

"Strange we don't hear any sound on deck, Edith," Dick remarked. "It's a long time since we've heard Judd make a move."

"That's what it is. I was just wondering about it."

"He was noisy enough awhile back. I can't imagine what it means."

"Perhaps he's gone to sleep."

"Shouldn't wonder. He was drunk enough. A bad job for us if he has."

"I'm afraid so; there are islands all around us here."

"If we run into one, that may be the end of us; still, we'll hope for the best; how dark it is getting. It must be there's a storm coming up."

"I think it's fog. The wind seems to have pretty well gone down, too."

"It feels like fog; it's awfully damp and uncomfortable. Oh, Dick, if we could only get free. It's terrible to be lying here at the mercy of that man."

"I've tried every way in the world," replied Dick, gloomily, "but I can't get at my hands nohow. If I could only get my teeth on to the cords I'd soon dispose of them, but I can't even raise my head."

"Dick!" cried Edith, suddenly, "I believe I can get free!"

"Hooray for our side!" as the Unknown says. "How are you going to manage it?"

"Why, there's a nail in the side of the bunk here. I can rub the cord against it!"

"Good enough! A nail is equal to a knife any day in the week. Let her go, Edith. If it takes an hour, don't give up."

For some moments Edith worked in silence. Dick could tell by the sounds that she was rubbing the cord against the nail.

"How are you making out?" he called.

"First rate! I believe I shall be free in a moment now."

"Keep it up! Let the good work go on."

It went on until it succeeded. In a few moments Edith made the cheering announcement that she had ground the cord through.

"That's the talk," said Dick in a whisper. "Let's be very quiet about it. Whatever else we do we don't want to stir Judd up. Can you untie your feet without help, think?"

"I'm sure I can. Just give me another moment," replied Edith, who was already working at the knots.

It was not over two minutes before Edith was free, and it took just about one more for her to get Dick's knife out of his pocket and cut him free also.

The first thing Dick did was to hold the cabin door, the next to feel for his revolver which had vanished, of course.

"Don't you fret. I've got a revolver hidden about me which I don't believe he found," said Edith. She



retired to her state-room and in a moment came back with the weapon in her hand.

Then Dick softly opened the cabin door and listened.

Not a sound was to be heard on deck.

"He's asleep if he's there," said Dick, "but we'll soon know." He stole up on deck, Edith following. It was fog, fog everywhere. The Minnie was enveloped in an impenetrable mist so thick that Dick could not feel sure that Judd was not on deck as appeared to be the case.

"He seems to be gone," whispered Edith.

"Yes, and he is gone," said Dick, after looking carefully around. "Gone sure as fate; but where?"

Here was a mystery, but Dick did not spend much time in thinking about it, for he saw that the situation was a very grave one. The yacht with her sail up was drifting among the reefs and rocks, at the mercy of the fog which might bring death to them at any moment.

Dick seized the wheel and called to Edith to lower the sheet, which she promptly did.

"Hark!" she exclaimed. "Don't you hear cries? It seems to me I do, or can it be only imagination?"

"No imagination about it; I hear them all right enough."

"What can it mean?"

"Give it up. Listen!"

They listened attentively, but could make nothing of the sounds.

Certainly there were voices calling in the distance, but what was being said they could not hear, and after a moment the sounds ceased.

"It's Ned and the Unknown!" declared Dick. "I'm absolutely certain of it. They've undertaken to follow us. They are lost in the fog!"

Then he called and called, but there was no answer. There was nothing strange in this, for the wind was all against them, and their voices could not possibly carry as far as the Bull's Head, which was where the sound they had heard came from.

"No use trying to make them hear," declared Dick. "Edith, what do you say to going back?"

"Through the fog with all the islands, how can we?"

"Ain't it as safe as to drift the way we are?"

"I don't think so. There is a strong tide running, and it naturally takes us around the rocks, while if we were to run up the sail and begin tackling the result might be just the reverse.

"I think there's just as much danger one way as the other, I do, indeed."

Dick was right and it was proved a moment later, for the yacht ran crashing on the rocks.

"Here's a bad job!" cried Edith. "What's to be done now?"

"Good Heavens! The first thing to be done is to get off of this! We're sinking!" exclaimed Dick.

"And the gold! What will Ned say if all our work goes for nothing?"

"Never mind the gold! That don't count! We want to save you first, Edith."

And something had to be done quickly—that was evident, for the Minnie was rapidly sinking; the rushing tide was banging her nose against the rocks, tearing her timbers to pieces, and giving plenty of chance for the water to rush in.

Dick leaped ashore and held out his arms for Edith, catching her when she jumped.

"Save the gold, Dick!" cried Edith. "Don't let it go by the board."

"I wonder if we could pull the yacht up on the shore a little?" cried Dick. "Do you know I believe we could."

"We might try it; every minute increases the risk though."

"There's a tree—if we could get a line around that I believe the job could be done."

Dick jumped aboard again and tossed one of the yacht's lines ashore, having first made fast to a ring in the bow.

Edith ran the line around the tree, and Dick was at her side to help pull a moment later.

It was hard pulling and slow work, but they did manage to move the Minnie, and after a little had the satisfaction of seeing her high upon the rocks. The sea broke over her stern a little, but that was all. With the rope tied she was practically safe.

"So far so good," said Dick. "I'm satisfied with that move; now, the next thing is to explore this island, and see where we've landed."

This was easily done. The island was but a small affair, being less than a quarter of a mile round. In the middle was a rocky elevation; a little back from the shore a few stunted trees grew. Altogether it was a dreary, desolate spot, and the situation was most gloomy, for at the mouth of the Yukon the fog often lasts for days together, and until it lifted there was no chance to make a move.

But Dick did not allow himself to be discouraged.

"We've got to go right to work," he declared. "That's the way to keep our spirits up. Now, the first thing is to make ourselves comfortable for the night."

"We'd better stay on the Minnie, hadn't we?" asked Edith.

"Certainly. It's entirely the best way, but we've got to brace her up first. We can't be comfortable with the yacht lying all listed over to one side as she is."

This was a matter easily remedied, although it took time.

There were many loose stones scattered along the beach, and these were wedged in under the hull of the Minnie in such a manner as to bring her up to the perpendicular. This done, Edith declared that she was going to cook dinner, for no matter what the situation was they must eat.

"I'll get you some dry wood for the galley fire," said Dick.

"No, no, I'll attend to that myself," replied Edith,



"and I want some fresh water too, if it's to be had. You go right to work to get the gold ashore, Dick. If you're right and Ned and the Unknown are out after us, sooner or later they are going to get here, and we want to have the gold secured."

Dick wondered if he was right or wrong as he worked lugging the heavy bags ashore.

He little guessed that if the fog were to clear away they would be able to see Ned and the Unknown on a rocky islet not a quarter of a mile distant from them.

The island upon which the Minnie had stranded was a continent compared to the Bull's Head, and Young Klondike and the Unknown decidedly had the worst of the situation, for the boat was a hopeless wreck.

Edith gathered the wood and started the galley fire going. Then she took the tea kettle and a dipper, and wandered along the shore looking for a spring.

She did not find the spring, but she did discover a little stream which worked its way between some rocks out into the sea, and as she stooped down to fill her kettle she suddenly saw a golden nugget as big as a hen's egg lying in the sand.

Edith picked it up and examined it. She had often heard Ned and other old Yukoners declare that where there is one nugget there are sure to be more, and she looked around for the others, scraping up the sand with a sharp stick.

All at once she gave a great shout, which brought Dick running along the beach.

It was a strike!

Edith had hit it!

"Gold!" she cried. "Gold! Who says I can't make a strike as well as anyone else? Look there, Dick!"

It was a perfect nest of nuggets lying in the bed of the stream.

## CHAPTER X.

### TURNING THE TABLES ON TONER.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, it looks pretty much as though we were stuck," remarked the Unknown, as he finished his twentieth walk around the Bull's Head.

"We are run ashore, high, but not dry," replied Ned. "Wait till the tide is up, and it's my opinion we'll find the Bull's Head under water. Hugo, you ought to know. Am I right or am I wrong?"

"You are wrong!" growled Judd. "I never saw the Bull's Head under water, and I've been here many a time."

"Speak when you are spoken to!" snapped the Unknown. "Nobody asked your opinion, and nobody wants it. It would be a good job if the water did come up and drown you!"

"There's room enough for us to stand, and that's about all," said Hugo. "I've no doubt that the island is covered over at a very high tide, but I never saw it so."

"Anyhow, we might as well be drowned as starve to death," said the detective, dejectedly, "and that's

what it's coming to if something don't happen, and for my part I don't see what can."

For two hours and over the situation remained unchanged.

To attempt to describe Young Klondike's gloomy reflections, would be as tedious as to go into a description of the way the Unknown fussed and fumed about the rock. At last the tide began to rise, and they had something else to think about as the water began creeping up the rock inch by inch.

It was just about this time that the Unknown suddenly sprang up and made a rush for Judd.

"You scoundrel! You villain! You miserable monkey!" he shouted. "Tell us what to do."

He caught Judd by the collar and shook him till his teeth chattered.

"Let me go!" cried Judd, terribly frightened. "Don't kill me, boss! How can I tell you what to do? I don't know no more than the dead!"

"Have you taken leave of your senses, Zed?" demanded Young Klondike. "Of course he don't know. How should he? It may be all his fault that we are in it, but it's the same boat for all of us and you can't alter that."

"No moralizing now, Young Klondike!" cried the detective. "I won't have it! Ye gods and little fishes! I tell you I won't have it! Where's those fellows we saw on the other island? Who were they? Judd, you know, and you've got to tell."

"Well, who said I wouldn't tell?" growled Judd. "I don't want to be shook to death to make me tell. Take your hands off of me, and I'll tell all I know."

"Let up on him!" cried Ned. "What do we care now about his tricks and plots? Of course we know he meant to sell me out to Toner—ain't that enough?"

"No, it ain't enough! Toner can turn the tide in our favor. I want to know where he is!" shouted the detective, and when he thought he had scared Judd sufficiently, he let go of his throat and threw him back against the rocks.

"Keep him away from me or he'll kill me!" groaned Judd. "I don't want nothing more to do with him. Toner is over on Walrus Island, I s'pose. He was just before I fell overboard. More than that I can't say."

"Is that really a fact?" demanded the detective.

"Yes, it is."

"Then you did start in to sell Young Klondike out to Toner? Tell the truth now, or I'll tumble you into the water, out of which you never ought to have come."

This capped the climax. Judd, pressed by the Unknown, went to work and told all.

"I see you know all about it, boss," he said, "so I might as well acknowledge the corn, I suppose. Now, what's next?"

"Next is to get Toner and his friends over here in their yacht," declared the Unknown.

"Are you crazy?" demanded Ned. "Do you want to have him do us all up?"



"Well, scarcely; I'll take my chances on that. He's got a boat, at all events, and I'd like to have you tell me what we are going to do without one."

"It's certainly an idea," said Hugo.

The Unknown chuckled and drew Ned and Hugo to one side. "Stay where you are," he said, threateningly to Judd. "If you try to follow us I'll break your nose."

"What's the good of being so savage, Zed?" asked Ned. "Of course, the fellow is a scoundrel, and all that, but——"

"Wait," interrupted the detective. "What am I here for, if not to help you two and myself into the bargain out of this scrape?"

"That's right."

"Well, then, I've got an idea."

"Out with it," said Hugo, "any idea is a blame sight better than no idea, and that's the fix we are in now."

"Right you are. Listen—look—ponder! Is that a cave?"

The Unknown had led them over to the other side of the islet where Judd could not see them, and he now pointed to a hole under a shelving rock.

"Well, you could hardly call it a cave," said Ned, "but I suppose a man could hide in there."

"Could two men hide in there?"

"I guess they could. It seems so to me. Get to the point."

"Coming right there. Now I say we're going to hit it if we can make our signals heard on Walrus Island, and it's for Hugo to say whether that is feasible or not."

"Oh, I should think we might," said Hugo.

"From here to Walrus Island as the crow flies is about half a mile, certainly no more."

"That's all right then. How's the wind?"

"In our favor."

"Then we're going to be right in it. How much of a liar are you, Hugo, for Young Klondike is none at all."

"What a queer way you have of getting at things!"

"How much of a liar am I? What do you mean?"

"I mean that I'm going to hide in this cave, and take Judd in along with me, and you shall pile these stones up around the entrance, so as no one would ever guess we were there."

"Well?"

"Then you and Young Klondike can begin your signaling, and try to draw Toner over to the island."

"Yes. What then? We shall be captured, of course."

"Of course. That's what I'm proposing to bring him over for; as soon as you are captured he'll start to take you over to Walrus Island, I suppose. How much of a place is it, Hugo?"

"Oh, it's quite an island. A mile around at least."

"A mile around is all right. Over to Walrus will be the move, and just as you get started, I—well, never mind what I'll do. Leave the rest to your uncle, that's all."

"It's certainly worth trying," said Ned. "I like the idea and can trust the Unknown to carry out his end of the plan."

"You bet you can," said the detective, very positively.

"That's all right, too," said Hugo, "but where does the lying come in?"

"Oh, you don't know me nor Judd. I was lost when the boat swamped, and Judd was never here at all."

"I can fix that part of it all right."

"Good enough. Then for the signal. How about that?"

"I've got a whistle about me. Suppose we begin by blowing it?"

This suited the Unknown's ideas, and they returned to the other side of the island.

A few moments later a shrill whistle sounded through the fog.

It was blown again and again.

To Dick and Edith, who heard it on their island, it came like a revelation and they tried their best to answer it, feeling sure that it was a signal from their friends.

But the wind was still against them, and Dick's shouts were not heard.

It was quite different with Martin Toner on Walrus Island.

He heard the whistle, and thought it came from Judd.

There were two men with Toner, Dawson City toughs, both of them, and about as hard a pair as one could ask to see.

Since parting with Judd, they had been in a good deal of trouble, for neither of them knew anything about navigating a yacht. The fact was, they did not know enough to lie to when Judd went overboard in the storm.

As soon as they heard the whistle they assumed that Judd had got into trouble in the fog, and was calling them to come to his relief.

They were not able to whistle back, but Toner had a voice like a fog-horn, and his shouts were soon heard on the Bull's Head.

"We've caught them," said the Unknown. "Oh, how I wish I could hear what they say."

"Can't make it out," replied Ned. "Can you, Hugo?"

"No, I can't," replied Hugo. "How is it with you, Judd?"

"Well, I think they mean to come over here," Judd growled.

"Do you think it's Toner?"

"Either him or his partners; probably Toner himself; he's got a terrible voice."

"That's all right, then," said Ned. "Give him another blow."

The whistle sounded again, and once more the answering cry was heard.

"What do you mean to do when they get here, may I ask?" said Judd. "There'll be a fight, sure."



"None of your business," snapped the Unknown. "Didn't that last shout sound nearer, dear boy?"

"I think it did," replied Ned. "Still, I shouldn't like to be sure."

The next time the answering cry came, however, it was certainly nearer. The Unknown now handed the whistle over to Ned.

"It's time to make a move," he said. "Judd, you come along with me. Hugo, you come, too—you know what for."

"And what for do I come?" asked Judd, turning pale. "You ain't going to kill me, are you, boss?"

"I'll kill you if you don't come. Trot along, now! No nonsense and no hanging back. Be as lively as you can."

After they had gone, Ned kept on blowing the whistle.

The answering shouts came promptly now, and were evidently drawing nearer and nearer.

Presently Hugo returned with word that Judd and the detective were safely stored up in the cave.

"What's his scheme, do you know?" asked Ned.

"No, he didn't tell me, but his last words were: 'Make 'em think that you've struck a bead on the island and bring them over my way!'"

"Oh, I see! An ambush!"

"It's that, of course. We are to surrender promptly; he told me that."

"He'll work it, I'll bet!" declared Ned. "I see his scheme now. We are to help him, of course."

Ned blew his whistle again, and this time the answer came in words.

"Hello! Is that you, Judd?" called a deep voice out of the fog.

"Wonder what I'm to say?" said Ned.

"You're to tell the truth and I'm to do the lying, I believe," laughed Hugo.

"That's the programme, I suppose. Hello, there, hello!"

"Hello!" came the answer. And then again: "Is that you, Judd?"

"No, it ain't Judd! I don't know Judd! I'm left on a rock; help me if you can!" Ned shouted back.

"Hello, you're lying—that won't do," chuckled Hugo.

"So I am. I'll be more careful, or better still, you do the talking."

"Come on! Come on, and rescue us!" yelled Hugo, and he kept calling at intervals until the sound of oars was heard, and a little later a boat pulled by two men with a third seated in the stern, loomed up out of the fog.

"Is that your Martin Toner?" Hugo whispered to Ned.

"That's the man," replied Young Klondike. "If we aren't to show fight, hadn't we better hide our arms?"

"It's a good idea. Drop your revolver in among the rocks behind you—here goes mine."

They had just time to dispose of their weapons when the boat came up against the rocks.

"Holy Moses! It's Young Klondike himself!" cried Toner. "Now I've got you! Throw up your hands, my buck! This is a chance I've been waiting for this long while!"

Ned threw up his hands promptly. So did Hugo. Both acted as though they were very much frightened, as indeed they might well have been, for rifles now covered them both.

What if the Unknown should fail?

Ned could not help thinking about it, of course.

But he had the satisfaction of knowing that the Unknown very seldom failed in any scheme of this sort.

Toner and his men now sprang ashore and made them prisoners, questioning them closely as to how they came there.

"Why, we were out making soundings and got caught in the fog," said Hugo. "Who are you, anyhow? What do you want to treat us this way for? Is there any good Christian business in that?"

"Shut your head?" growled Toner. "There's a man who knows me well enough. I'm out for the dust and you are trying some crazy scheme to get gold up from the deep sea. Of course you failed."

"Why, of course. I told Mr. Golden it would be a failure from the start; but you haven't answered my question yet?"

"What question?"

"What do you mean by treating us this way?"

"Now, looker here. I'll answer that when I get good and ready. Hold your jaw, Mr. Man, and let me talk to Young Klondike. Where's your partners—my lucky friend, where's he?"

"If you mean Mr. Luckey, I don't know where he is," replied Ned.

He was watching his chance now to work these scoundrels over into the way of the Unknown.

"That's a lie! Didn't he and that gal come down here with you? I have reason to know they did."

"Well, I suppose they did, but we left them on board our yacht."

"The Minnie?"

"Yes, the Minnie."

"The Minnie went past here a while ago in charge of a low-down sucker named Judd. Do you mean to tell me you don't know anything about that?"

"Of course we don't," said Hugo. "We left the Minnie at Duck Island where I've no doubt she is now."

"If you ain't a liar, I never saw one," snarled Toner. "Hold your jaw, will you! Young Klondike, we'll carry on this conversation to a finish later. Meanwhile you're my prisoner, and somebody has got to put up a right smart lot of dust before you get free."

"It's just as I supposed," said Ned. "Look out, Martin Toner. You are playing a high handed game, and one that won't succeed in the long run."

"Won't, eh? What would you have me do? Leave you here on this rock?"



"No, no! Don't do that. Take us back to Duck Island to our friends."

"I tell you again your friends ain't on Duck Island, and you know it blamed well. We'll run you to a place of safety, you bet your sweet life, and—hello! I came near forgetting. Where's that blamed little runt of a detective—him with the tall hat?"

"Couldn't say."

"Isn't he here with you?"

"Can't you see he ain't? You seem to be singularly blind to-day, Toner. I don't believe you would know a bed of nuggets if there was one put right before your eyes."

Here was the bait which Ned had been watching his chance to throw out all along.

"What's that? What's that?" demanded Toner.

"Why didn't you keep your mouth shut?" snapped Hugo. "What did you want to say that for?"

"What harm can it do?" replied Ned. "He couldn't find the place if he was to try."

"He can't, eh?" chuckled Toner. "What's the reason he can't? If there's any nest of nuggets on this here island, gentlemen, you are going to show me where it is."

"There!" exclaimed Hugo. "You see, you've spoiled it all!"

"He can have it all if he'll only take us back to our yacht at Duck Island," said Ned, half smiling in spite of himself at the eagerness with which Toner was watching them both.

Fact was the bait had been swallowed hook and all.

"Now, come," said Toner, "you're going to take us over to the place where you've left those nuggets, that's what you're going to do," and handing his rifle to the man behind him, he whipped out a revolver and covered Ned.

This looked threatening, and was intended to be just what it looked.

"I suppose we've got to do it, Hugo," said Ned.

"I suppose we have," grunted Hugo. "I don't see any help for it now."

"Come this way, then," said Ned. "It ain't far—there ain't anything very far on this island, can't be, you know."

"Go on, and don't talk," growled Toner. "One of your fellows can stay here and mind the boat in case of any gum games being at the bottom of this yere."

Ned led on toward the place where the Unknown lay hidden. It looked rather doubtful how the matter was going to turn out just about that time, but Hugo, who walked beside him, managed to whisper, unheard:

"Leave all to me—I have got my instructions. I lied to you when I said I hadn't. This thing is going to come out all right."

Ned made no reply. He had already formed his own idea of how to proceed, and as it turned out his plan was exactly the same as the Unknown's.

"Here we are," said Hugo, as they came opposite

the place. "That's where we find them, I believe, boss." Hugo pointed down on the shore where Toner and his companion could only see a lot of water washed stones.

"That's the place," replied Young Klondike. "Mr. Toner could see the nuggets better if he was to stand with his back up against these rocks."

"Just what I was going to suggest myself," said Hugo. "The nuggets are there if you only look right."

"What's the matter with going down on the shore and finding them all right?" growled Toner, determined to be contrary.

"Just as you like," said Hugo, shrugging his shoulders. "They make a pretty good display as they lie, though. Thought mebbe you'd like to have a look first."

He seemed so careless about it that Toner at once dropped his suspicions and backed up against the rocks, his companion doing the same.

Now the rocks blocked up the cave, and as Hugo had put them there he had pretty good reason to know what lay behind.

So had Toner and friend an instant later.

Slam! bang! came the rocks against them.

Down went Toner and friend on their noses, and out jumped the Unknown with a revolver in each hand.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, I've got my man at last!" he shouted. "Surrender, you scoundrels or you die!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### DOWN IN THE DEEP SEA ONCE MORE.

OF course, Ned and Hugo lost not an instant in coming to the Unknown's assistance, and they soon had the two scoundrels disarmed.

Ned hearing the third man running toward them, over the rocks, alarmed by the racket, no doubt, stole forward to meet him, and did the job so well that he had this fellow a prisoner also before he knew where he was.

It was a moment of triumph. They led their prisoners back to the boat, Judd going with them.

The treacherous diver seemed greatly elated at the capture of Martin Toner.

"So you will go back on a fellow, will you?" he chuckled. "This is my revenge—this is the way we fix such murderous hounds as you are. This pays up for your desertion of me that night."

Toner glared.

"Don't you believe a word that cuss tells you, Young Klondike," he growled. "He's as deep in the mud as we are in the mire. What are you going to do with us—say?"

Ned didn't answer, for the Unknown had given him the tip to be silent.

The detective now began to examine the boat. It



was a small affair, but quite big enough to carry three as it had done before.

"Think you can find the way to Walrus Island in the fog, Hugo?" the detective asked him in a whisper.

"I'm sure I don't know; I can try. Anyhow, we don't want to stay here."

"Get in, then—you, too, Ned!"

"You ain't going to leave us here to starve to death, are you? Don't say that you mean to do that!" cried Martin Toner, greatly alarmed.

"Of course we do. That's just what our intention is," chuckled Judd, who had fully made up his mind that he was going, too.

But the Unknown sprang into the boat and pushed off.

"Hold on! Hold on! Give me a chance to get aboard!" bawled Judd.

"Not to-day; some other day!" laughed the detective. "We'll call around for you fellows later on."

Ned seized the oars and pulled away.

Judd rushed into the water waist deep, and tried to board the boat.

"Get back there!" cried the detective, drawing his revolver. "You're a dead man if you come any nearer! Good-by, Judd! Good-by, all! We've turned the tables upside down! Ha, ha, ha!"

And so they pulled away into the fog, and were soon out of sight of the Bull's Head.

"Come; that was worked pretty slick," said Hugo. "I congratulate you on the success of your scheme, boss."

"Don't say a word. I always get there if I can. Ye gods and little fishes, them fellers will have plenty of time to think over their sins now."

"I don't like leaving them there to perish," said Ned. "It goes very much against the grain."

"Soft-hearted as usual," replied the Unknown. "Isn't it better for them to be there, than for us? By the Jumping Jeremiah, leaving us there to perish would have been the mildest medicine we'd have got. But we don't have to do it to them. After we get through our business down here at the mouth of the Yukon, we can call for them or send down from St. Michaels, or fix it somehow. Don't forget Edith and Dick, dear boy, they are our first care now."

As though Ned could do such a thing, or needed to be reminded of it. His anxiety for his missing friends was as great as it possibly could be, and what was more he had every reason to be anxious on his own account.

The fog was terribly dense, and here they were cruising about right in the track of any vessel or steamer which might be coming from or going to St. Michaels.

To be sure there were very few crafts going in either direction, but still there was the chance of being run down at any moment.

It was an uncomfortable situation, to say the least.

Now they all relapsed into silence, and Ned, under Hugo's direction, pulled steadily on.

Hugo was doing his best. He thought he was heading for Walrus Island, but the fact was he was simply describing an immense circle, which if continued would bring them back to Bull's Head again.

Young Klondike began to suspect this and was becoming very anxious, when all at once they heard voices talking right ahead of them.

"Stop!" cried Ned. "We'll be on the rocks! Blest if I don't believe we are back at the place where we started out!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Hugo, as he shipped his oars.

"Hello! Anybody ahoy!" shouted the detective. "Who's there?"

"Hello, Zed!" came the answer out of the mist.

"Dick!" shouted Ned.

"Hello, Ned!" came the answer again, in a woman's voice this time.

"Edith!" echoed the Unknown. "Hooray! By the Jumping Jeremiah, we are right in it with both feet."

"Are you all there?" yelled Dick.

"All here, right side up with care! Is that the Minnie?" bawled the Unknown.

"No! We're on an island! Look out for the rocks!"

It seemed almost too good to be true, but it wasn't, and in a moment the boat made the island in safety, and there was great rejoicing all around.

The next few moments were taken up in explanations, for on both sides there was a lot to say.

The time of trouble was passing away, for while they were talking the wind shifted, and in a few moments more the fog went rolling seaward, and as beautiful a sunset followed as ever was seen at the mouth of the Yukon.

The coming of the light brought several discoveries.

First, all were amazed to discover that the Bull's Head was so near.

There were Martin Toner and Judd and the others moving about the lonely rock. They quickly spied Young Klondike's party, and shouted something which could not be heard.

Judd shook his fist at them, and seemed to be in a terrible rage, all of which was decidedly amusing and did no harm.

Next discovery was that Walrus Island was only a short distance away, and what was more agreeable there lay the yacht Twilight at anchor in a little cove.

"We are all right now," declared Ned. "Hugo and I will run over and get the yacht, and we'll return to Duck Island at once."

"Going down again after we get back?" asked Dick, "or do we give the deep sea diggings up?"

"We don't give it up without one more try at it, that's certain," replied Ned, "but I don't propose to stay here more than twenty-four hours. This work



is too dangerous. We'd better get back to St. Michaels as soon as we can."

"As far as getting gold is concerned, you don't have to go down," said Edith. "I've made a strike right here."

"You, Edith?"

"Oh, yes! Even I. Once in a while I can do it—come and see."

Edith exhibited her nest of nuggets. She and Dick had taken out quite a number of them, but the majority remained undisturbed.

"That's a pocket sure," declared Ned. "However, there's probably several thousand dollars in it, and we want all there is going."

"That's what's the matter," laughed the detective. "We'll scoop it out while you and Hugo go over to Walrus Island for the yacht, and then we'll scoop it in."

It was dark by the time Ned returned with the Twilight.

As they passed the Bull's Head Toner begged pitiously for rescue, and so did Judd, who seemed to have completely changed his tune.

"We'll take care of you fellows later on," was all the encouragement they got from Young Klondike; and Ned was quite in earnest about this. He had no intention of leaving them on the island to starve.

The Twilight was not as substantial a boat as the Minnie, but still she was a good seaworthy little yacht.

Hugo examined the Minnie and declared that a few hours' work would put her in condition to make it safe to steam to St. Michaels in her, if they were not overtaken by a storm.

"I tell you what we'll do," said Ned. "Let's go back to Duck Island now in the Twilight, and first thing in the morning you and the Unknown can return here, put the Minnie in shape, and then take our prisoners off the Bull's Head."

"You are determined to do it, I see," said Hugo. "No use of arguing with you, I suppose. My idea was to leave them there till I could get you all safe back in St. Michaels, and then I meant to come down with the sheriff, and scoop them all in."

But Ned was humane, and was determined that it should be the other way.

Hugo offered no further objections, for there was the Minnie to be considered. He was sure he could safely tow her back to St. Michaels and if she were to be left at the island she was liable to break up with the first storm.

The next few hours were busy ones. There was the gold to be loaded on to the Twilight, and the diving apparatus and stores to be transferred from the Minnie.

When all this had been accomplished Ned, with Dick and Edith, went to the stream to examine Edith's strike.

It proved to be a pocket just as Ned had predicted. About six thousand dollars' worth of nuggets were

taken out, and that exhausted it. By midnight they were ready for a start.

Toner and the others watched them gloomily as they flew past the Bull's Head. Judd made one more appeal for rescue, but nobody paid the least attention to him, and the rocky islet was soon out of sight.

In less than an hour they were safe back on Duck Island again, and all hands turned in for the night, some on board the yacht and some in the tent.

Morning dawned clear and cool. Edith and the Unknown had breakfast ready before Ned awoke.

"Now for the deep sea diggings again!" exclaimed Young Klondike. "Of course I'm booked to go down. Who'll go with Hugo after the prisoners and the yacht?"

"It's a dangerous business," said Hugo. "I don't like the idea of taking those scoundrels aboard."

"I don't see where the danger comes in," replied Ned. "We disarmed them and they can do nothing. You can make them come aboard one at a time, and tie them up as they come. I couldn't rest in peace, thinking of them there on the island, exposed to the storm which may come any time now. I'll go myself if nobody else will."

"Ned is right," said Edith. "I think you must all see it so."

"Let him have his way," added the Unknown. "I'll go with Hugo. Maybe those fellows will get the best of me, but I don't think they will."

It was so arranged.

The Twilight's boat was fitted out with the diving apparatus, and Ned pulled out to the ledges, followed by Dick and Edith in the Minnie's spare boat.

As soon as they had started, Hugo and the Unknown boarded the Twilight and started back among the islands.

Everything pointed to success, and the Unknown paced the deck, talking in his peculiar way, telling stories and making comical remarks, until all at once he made a rush for the bows and looked ahead.

"Hello! What is it?" asked Hugo.

"A sail! Don't you see?"

"I do now, yes! Some fishing boat down from St. Michaels, most likely."

"There, she's gone!" exclaimed the Unknown, as the sail disappeared among the larger islands to the leeward.

They thought no more of the matter then, but it was brought to their minds in the most forcible manner a little later, for when they came in sight of the Bull's Head they could see nothing of the prisoners left on those lonely rocks.

"Gone!" cried the Unknown. "By the Jumping Jeremiah—gone!"

And gone they were. When the Unknown went ashore on the island there was nothing to be seen of the Toner gang.

They had departed, leaving no trace behind them.

"They must have been taken off by the fishing



boat," said Hugo. "Now we can work our deep sea diggings in peace."

As a matter of fact, Hugo was greatly relieved, for he did not care to risk another encounter with those desperate men.

Before this discovery was made Young Klondike had been down twice, and each visit to the deep sea diggings resulted in several basket loads of gold.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BATTLE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

"GOING to try it again after dinner, Ned?" asked Dick, as our Klondikers sat down before Edith's bountiful spread on the ledges, now laid bare by the outflowing tide.

Edith never forgot to look after the housekeeping end of the business. Of course she couldn't do much to help on the work in a case like this, but she could and did see that Ned and Dick were provided with the very best of food.

"I see no reason why I shouldn't go down two or three times more," replied Ned. "Everything has worked like a charm this morning, and unless Dick feels that he wants to try it I'm ready for business again just as soon as I'm through here."

"I don't want any more of it," replied Dick. "The diving I did day before yesterday is quite enough."

"There ain't much fun in it, that's a fact; but when it pays as well as it did these last few times, a fellow kind of hates to give it up."

"That's right," said Dick. "How do things look down there now, Ned? Any falling off in the supply?"

"Falling off! Not a bit. There are nuggets down there till you can't rest. You never saw anything like it in all your life."

"And yet I suppose we'd find it hard work to make anyone believe we ever took this gold out of the deep sea."

"Do you think it will be worth our while to try it again?" asked Edith.

"Not this fall. As I said before the risk is too great. Next summer we might make another move at it. I believe three months' steady work here would yield a couple of millions."

Dick was for doing it and began to lay out plans for the next summer. Many divers were to be employed, and the work to be carried out on a large scale. It just suited Dick to build castles in the air, but after all there was no nonsense about this business for there was the gold.

After dinner Ned prepared to make another descent and with Dick returned to the boat.

"I think we'll tackle the nugget bed in a new place," he said. "My idea is that it runs out behind that island over there, and I'm willing to put in one trip to find out."

"I'll stay here on the rocks and clear up the things," said Edith. "I'll join you later on."

Who could have thought of trouble then! The sun was shining brightly, and the atmosphere as clear as a bell. No sail had been seen; there was nothing to lead Young Klondike to suppose that danger was lurking near, and yet so it was. At that very moment evil eyes were peering out at him from among the thick bushes on the island.

While they ate and rested a boat had pulled up to this same island by another way. They might have seen it if they had been looking, but they were not.

"This is right in the line of the nugget bed, I suppose?" remarked Dick. "It don't seem so at all to me, but I suppose you know."

"I'm sure of it," replied Ned. "Of course I can't tell if the nuggets run out this far, but I think it's worth the try."

When they got in around behind the island, the boat was anchored close to shore and Ned took a sounding.

The lead reported ninety feet of water.

"Your deep hole can't be here then," Dick remarked.

"It don't look so. Still the rise may be gradual, and there's nothing to hinder the nuggets being here just the same."

"Going down?"

"Yes; right away now."

"Shall I let the basket down right after you as we did at the other place, or shall I wait till I get the signal?"

"Better wait for the signal. I may want to come right up."

Ned now proceeded to get into his diving-suit and Dick put on the helmet. Dick understood working the air pump all right by this time, and there seemed no possibility of any miss.

Ned dropped over the side and vanished with a cheerful wave of the hand.

Dick sat watching the place where he had disappeared with his hand on the air pump, so intent on his own reflections that he failed to hear the slight noise behind him, which otherwise he might easily have heard.

It was a man swimming toward the boat, and that man was Judd.

With as little noise as possible he came alongside, and catching the gunwale moved the boat and made his presence known.

Dick was terribly startled.

He struck at him as he sprang aboard, but Judd dodged.

Realizing his danger, Dick drew his revolver, and would have fired, but before he could cock it Judd was upon him, and dealt the boy a stunning blow between the eyes, which sent him back unconscious in the boat.

"B'gosh, I've done it!" shouted Judd. "Come on, Martin! Young Klondike is at my mercy now."

There was Martin Toner, too. He was swimming



over from the island, and in a moment joined Judd in the boat.

"Keep quiet," he said. "We don't want to have to tackle the girl till we've finished with these two. Wait, I'll tie Luckey up. Look to your air pump, Judd. We don't want our game to die on our hands."

Judd was already at the pump and he made no reply to this remark.

Martin Toner was for blackmail still, in spite of what had occurred, but Judd was for murder. It looked very bad for Ned just then, for this man was of a sullen and revengeful disposition, and he had fully made up his mind that Young Klondike should not be spared.

"Ha, ha!" chuckled Toner; "we are right in it. Lucky thing for us that the fishing boat took us off the rocks just when it did. Well, Judd, what do you think now of my scheme of buying a boat from them and hanging around here a while? Will it pay? I guess yes! All I ask is to capture Young Klondike and hold him for ransom. That's better than wasting one's time gold digging. Half a million is my price and I'm going to stick to it, for just as sure as you and me are sitting in this boat I'll get it in the end."

"Just so," said Judd, looking at the diving-suit in the boat.

"What's that?" asked Toner as the signal rope was shaken.

"Don't know. He's signaling for something. Guess I'll go down and see."

"Oh no! I wouldn't do that. Yes, I'm going to do it. I'm going to settle with Young Klondike in the deep sea."

"Perhaps you could get onto this gold business at the same time. If there really is anything down here we want to know it, I suppose."

"I tell you there is. Didn't I see the gold they brought up with my own eyes? I'm going down and I'm going to locate the diggings. After that we can handle him just the same."

"But suppose the girl comes?"

"Shoot her, then. Come now, Martin, don't raise any more objections. You know you promised to give me this chance."

"So I did, and you shall have it," growled Toner. "Anyhow, I'd like to have your opinion about this deep sea gold."

Judd now proceeded to get into the spare diving-suit which was in the boat.

He had made up his differences with Martin Toner, and felt no fear, for the man had been a diver himself and knew just what to do.

While these preparations were going on, the signal rope was shaken again and again.

It was not the signal that Ned wanted to come up; what he was after was the basket, for he had found the nuggets just as plenty here as on the other side of the island.

After pulling the signal line many times, Ned be-

gan to get excited. He could not understand why Dick failed to respond.

He was just about to go up to find out what the matter was for himself, when he suddenly perceived a man wearing a diving-suit coming toward him.

"It's Dick!" he thought. "He's taken it into his head to come down. Edith is at the pump. Well, well!"

He was half angry to think that Dick should have deserted his post, and half pleased to see his friend there in the deep sea, and he hurried forward to meet him, at the same time pointing to the nuggets which lay strewn all over the sand.

The man moved steadily forward, making no sign of recognition until he was close to Young Klondike who, to his surprise, now saw that the mysterious diver was a larger man than Dick.

Who could it be? Hugo?

Ned saw at a glance that this was impossible, for Hugo was a perfect giant.

Close to him now the diver stopped and peered at him through the window of his helmet, and Ned peering back saw to his horror that he was looking upon the evil countenance of Judd.

Here was a treacherous business, but where was Dick?

Ned's heart sank as he gave the signal line one last despairing pull, and started to dispose of his weights.

Too late! In an instant Judd darted forward, and made for Ned's air tube, to cut which meant instant death!

\* \* \* \* \*

Up at the surface Martin Toner was sitting in the boat half wishing that he could go down himself, when Edith, through with her work on the ledges now, came around the point of the island in her boat.

It will not be difficult to judge of her horror when she caught sight of a stranger in Dick's place, but what must have been Dick's feelings, back to consciousness now, and lying there in the bottom of the boat, helpless to make a move.

"Toner!" he groaned out. "Oh, Toner! Is it you—where's Judd?"

"Ho! You've come back to life again, have you?" chuckled Toner. "So, so! Now's a good time for me to settle this business! Where's Judd, do you say? Why, Judd is at the bottom of the sea. He's gone down there to kill Young Klondike, and he'll do it, too, the moment I give him the signal which I'm going to give him, mark you, unless I succeed in bringing you to terms."

Dick's heart almost ceased to beat. For himself he cared nothing—it was Ned.

"What terms do you want?" he asked. "Speak up! I'll do anything you say!"

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Will you? Will you? So my time has come at last, has it? Tell me, Luckey, have you the power to sign for the firm?"

"Yes."

"Got your check book with you?"

"Yes, yes!"



"Will you object to signing a little check, say for half a million, drawn to my order?"

"I'll sign it," said Dick, promptly, "the moment Ned Golden is back in this boat alive."

"That won't do, you must sign it now. If you don't I give Judd the signal, and at the same time chop Young Klondike's air tube with this little hatchet."

And the wretch took up a hatchet which lay in the bottom of the boat and held it over the air tube.

Poor Dick's breath was almost gone as he gasped out:

"I'll sign! I'll sign!"

"Yes, and more than that—you must write on the back of the check that it can't be stopped; that——"

Crack!

Suddenly a shot was fired, and Toner, with a wild cry, flung up his hands and fell over backward in the boat.

Poor Dick! He was more startled than ever now.

Perhaps it was Edith who had fired, but even so it might mean death to Ned, for was not Judd down there with him in the deep sea?

He could not raise himself to look, for he was tied fast; but if it had been possible to have done so, he would have seen Edith coming around the island on one side, while the Twilight, with the Minnie in tow, was rounding it on the other.

The Unknown stood at the bow with a smoking rifle in his hand.

"Don't be frightened, Edith!" he shouted. "We'll save him! Hugo is ready to go down!"

Blessings on Hugo for bringing duplicate apparatus on that trip!

With the intention of going down directly he reached the ledges, the diver had made everything ready before they rounded the island and discovered how necessary was his presence in the deep sea.

Even as the Unknown spoke he dropped over the side and sank out of sight.

Would he be in time?

It was doubtful.

The battle between the divers was already in progress, and Young Klondike was holding his own.

No spoken word, no blow struck—that was not the way they fought, oh, no!

Each was struggling to get at the other's air tube, each was dodging this way and that. One nip on that thin line of rubber which came trailing down from above, and the battle was lost for one and won for the other.

To Young Klondike it was the most terrible experience of his life, as he went jumping about on those golden sands.

Suddenly there came a dark shadow, and a diver dropped between them.

He was a man of giant proportions, and he carried a hatchet in his gloved hand.

"Hugo!" thought Ned, and then came a feeling of unspeakable relief.

Well might it be so!

The battle was over.

Judd recognized his master, and dropping his weights went flying to the surface.

He came up only to be captured, too, for Edith was already in the boat and Dick was free.

Ned was up a moment later to find Judd a prisoner. Then Hugo came up and boarded the Minnie.

"Hooray!" shouted the Unknown, dancing a jig on the deck. "Hold him, boys! Don't let him slip you this time! By the Jumping Jeremiah, I'll never rest until I've clapped the handcuffs on that man!"

And the detective had the satisfaction of doing that very thing a moment later when the Twilight came alongside the boat.

With the snap of those handcuffs our story ends, for it was all smooth sailing after that.

Judd was imprisoned on the Minnie, and Martin Toner, who was not badly hurt by any means, kept him company.

Later, the party returned to St. Michaels, and the two scoundrels were lodged in jail.

But Young Klondike was not the sort to allow a little scare like this to interfere with business. They remained two days longer at the deep sea diggings, both Ned and Hugo going down many times. When they finally pulled up stakes and started back, the Twilight carried more than a hundred thousand dollars in gold.

Of course their arrival at St. Michaels created the greatest excitement, for Ned made no effort to conceal their good fortune.

The result was a grand rush for the mouth of the Yukon, after Young Klondike's party started on the up-river stream for Dawson City, and for a week Hugo's services were in great demand, and Judd was let out of jail and put to work, too.

Then came a great storm and for days nothing was done, and when Hugo went down after it was all over, he found that the sand had worked into the depression, and not a nugget was to be seen.

Perhaps some other storm may in time wash them clear again, but for the present Young Klondike's Deep Sea Diggings will have to be abandoned, and we shall hear no more of them, but follow our hero through another train of startling adventures in the next number of this series, the title of which is "YOUNG KLONDIKE'S WINTER CAMP; OR, MINING UNDER THE SNOW."



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